MARVEL Age 119

IRON MAN 30th anniversary

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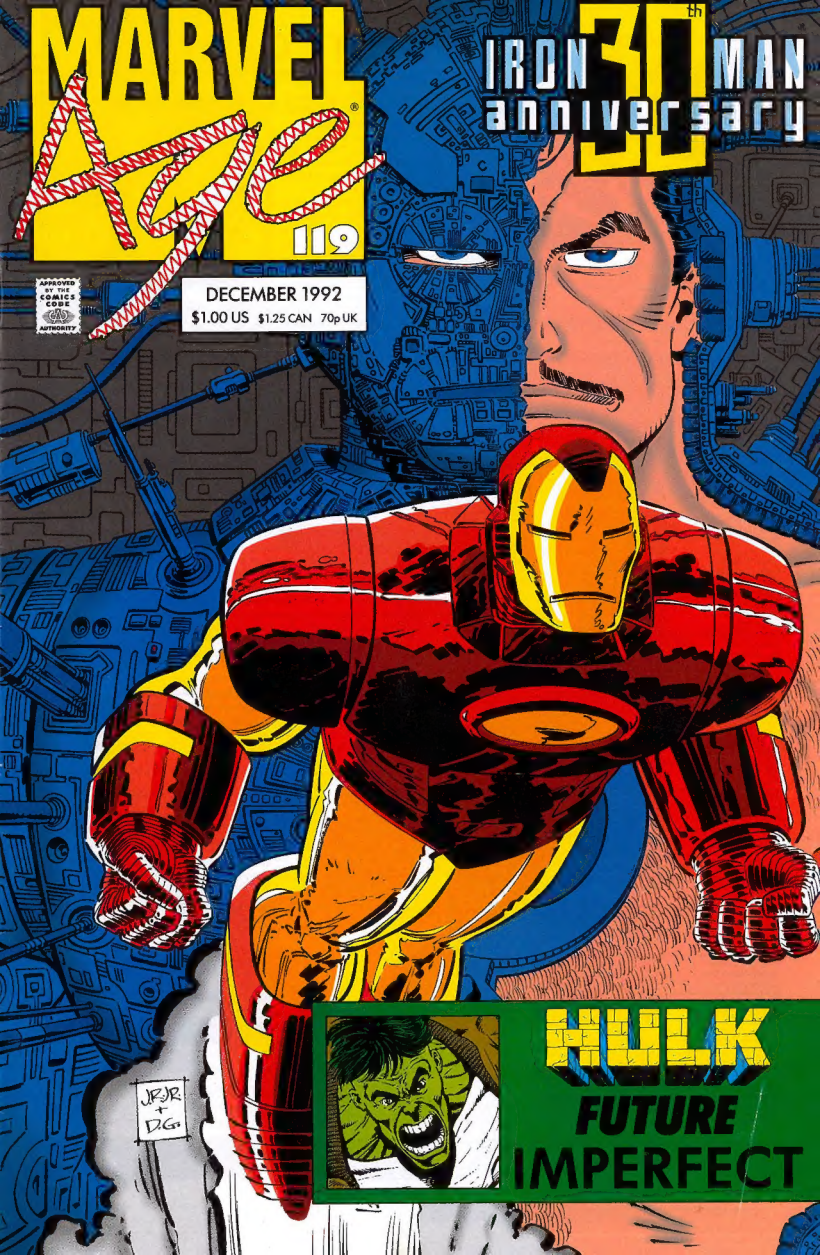

HULK

FUTURE IMPERFECT

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EDITORIAL

TALES OF SUSPENSE featuring
IRON MAN and CAPTAIN AMERICA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
59
NOV
BIG NEWS! STARTING WITH THIS GREAT ISSUE 2 BIG FEATURES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!
IRON MAN BATTLES THE BLACK KNIGHT!
THE GIANT OF THE CENTURY COMPANION AMERICA ARRIVES!

I can trace the beginning of my comic book collecting practically to the month. If I look at the mid-1965 house advertisements, I can spot nearly all of the issues that hooked me on Spider-Man, **TALES TO ASTONISH**, the **FANTASTIC FOUR, SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS**, the **RAWHIDE KID** and the rest.

One of those, **TALES OF SUSPENSE #59**, proclaimed on the cover, "Big News! Starting with this great issue: **2 BIG FEATURES** for the price of one!" as Captain America joined Iron Man in one of Marvel's most famous "split titles." The Cap story by Lee and Kirby was a terrific introduction to the character — an exciting, self-contained 10-page vignette.

Reading the Iron Man adventure, on the other hand, was like being dropped headlong into a soap opera. A *complicated* soap opera.

Here was this guy, Stark, who was rich and handsome, with a suit of armor that made him incredibly powerful. He had a loyal but neurotic bodyguard (Happy Hogan), a beautiful, redheaded secretary (Pepper Potts), his own munitions manufacturing company, and everything a pre-adolescent reader could ever want. But he was miserable, because a heart condition trapped him in his iron chestplate, forcing him to keep secrets from his best friends, isolating him from the woman he secretly loved, and in general creating more angst than I could ever have imagined. . .

It was great!

Tony was *real*. He was proof that you didn't have to be pre-adolescent to be miserable. He was proof that *even* a person who was miserable could be a fantastic super hero! And he was a *self-made* hero. Tony Stark wasn't bitten by a spider or irradiated in a gamma blast. He was a guy who, faced with a life-or-death situation, *built* himself a heroic persona. Iron Man wasn't created by fate — he was created by Tony Stark. And he was one of my first brushes with science fiction, an influence that would lead me to Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury and worlds upon worlds of imagination.

Stan Lee and Don Heck had an impressive impact on an impressionable young reader — an impact for which I've never really thanked them. So thanks, guys. Here's hoping that your armored Avenger continues to inspire young readers for three more decades.

— Steve Saffel
Editor

(NOTE: Some of you may have been expecting this issue's John Romita, Jr., cover masterpiece to be inked by Barry Windsor-Smith. Barry intended to do so, but his recently-expanded publishing endeavors overwhelmed his good intentions. Luckily for us all, John's **CABLE** inker, Dan Green, was available and jumped in to rescue the day. You're a lifesaver, Dan.

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Up Front

MARVEL ROCKS

What are your five favorite rock bands? Marvel wants to know. Send a postcard to Rogue Editor Mort Todd with your top picks. The address is:

Marvel Rocks!
Mort Todd, Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

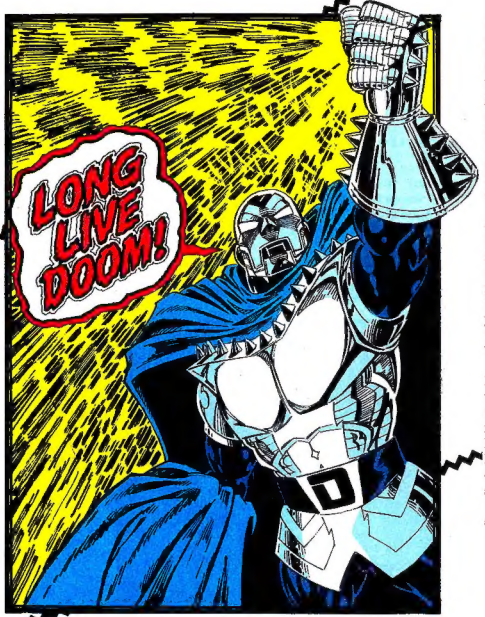
Why, you ask? All will be revealed... soon.

SLEEPWALKER

"Sleepy Stories" may sound like pleasant bedtime reading, but what the term *really* refers to is the **SLEEPWALKER HOLIDAY SPECIAL**—48-page edition spotlighting the artwork of: Sam Kieth, Rick Leonardi, Joe Quesada, Bruce Zick and Joe Phillips. The spectacular includes a collection of all-new Sleepwalker tales and a special pinup gallery.

In "Falling Asleep," Rick Sheridan accidentally bumps his head and falls, unconscious, out of a moving airplane, releasing Sleepwalker, who finds he has only a few precious seconds to save Rick's life. But, if Sleepy startles Rick, Rick will wake up and Sleepy will disappear, so the extra-dimensional hero must save Rick *without* waking him up!

"Insomnia" depicts Sleepwalker's repeated attempts to stop a maniacal killer, attempts constantly foiled by Rick's waking up—a condition brought on by a large Mexican dinner. And, "It's a Dog's Life" is a tongue-in-cheek spoof of a typical Sleepwalker plot as seen through the eyes of Rick's dog, Rambo.



ITEM! An impoverished purgatory of misery governed by a cruel, underworld dictatorship — this is the world of **DOOM 2099**, Marvel's newest 2099 title. Written by John Francis Moore (*Superboy, The Flash* TV series), penciled by Pat Broderick (**ALPHA FLIGHT**), and inked (as of issue #2) by John Beatty (PUNISHER), this is the grim Marvel Universe of the future as seen through the eyes of a man who may or may not be one of the most feared villains of all time — Dr. Doom.

One fateful day in the year 2099, in the small European nation of Latveria, a strange figure falls from the sky. Clad in a suit of armor and green cape, the imposing newcomer happens across a small band of gypsy revolutionaries. Donning new state-of-the-2099-art armor, he takes command of the young cybernaut rebels, and vows to topple the oppressed nation's despotic ruler, Tiger Wylde.

Is this enigmatic man really Victor Von Doom, the legendary monarch of Latveria who disappeared a century before? **DOOM 2099** Editor Joey Cavalieri noted, "We're not saying. Maybe he is, maybe he isn't. But, *he* sure believes he is." And, with the knowledge and powers of the true devious doctor, this stranger may very well represent doom for his enemies.

DOOM 2099, the newest of the **2099** series, makes its debut in November.

WITHOUT IT, I'M JUST ANOTHER SHOPPER.
ATTENTION, SHOPPERS. PLEASANT VALLEY MALL WILL BE CLOSING IN FIFTEEN MINUTES. HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

ITEM! What do you give the Punisher for a Christmas present? That's the question facing Micro in one of the four stories in the **PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL**. This 48-page bookshelf Christmas present will wrap this quartet of seasonal tales in a special foil stamped cover by John Hebert.

The Microchip story, "Red Christmas," is written by Steven Grant, and shows a vengeful wiseguy making out his Christmas wish list — with the Punisher's head at the top of the list.

Three additional stories, written by Punisher regular creators, Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning, will contain no dialogue. These, "Silent Nights," will include the tale of a mobster's Yuletide party — rudely interrupted by a caterer-costumed Punisher — and another featuring the chaos caused by an Uzi-toting Santa at a busy toy store.

John Hebert, John Ridgway, Mike Harris, and John Czop are the illustrators for the **PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL**, scheduled for release next month.

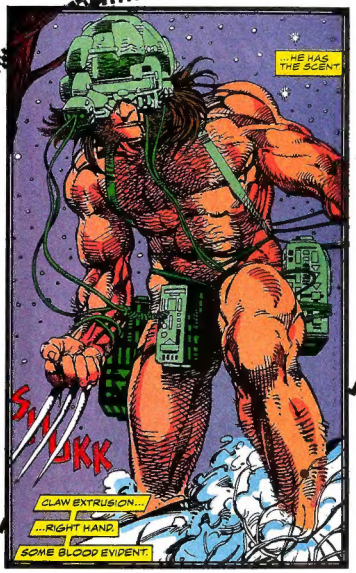
ITEM! A new process foil cover, the introduction of a major new character and the continuation of the seminal "Cyberwar" storyline combine to make **DEATHLOK #19** (on sale in November) a landmark issue.

Thanks to new "semi-transparent inks," the spectacular foil cover will surpass others done in the past. While other covers have incorporated a glossy, eye-catching process, they have only utilized foil dyed with one color. These new inks print over the foil, so that *every* color on the cover of **DEATHLOK #19** will appear in a metallic effect; making it the first all-foil cover in comic history.

Like Deathlok, the dramatic new character, Siege, is a cyborg built by the evil Roxxon Corporation. But, unlike the pacifist Deathlok, Siege is a sadistic, cold-blooded killer. With strong and mysterious ties to Deathlok, Siege is both his predecessor and the next step in Deathlok technology. Thus, he will be Deathlok's deadliest foe.

DEATHLOK #19 is part 3 of the five part "Cyberwar" storyline that will be tying up loose ends dating back to the **DEATHLOK LIMITED SERIES.** The epic features appearances by Harlan Ryker, Nick Fury, Silver Sable, and John Kelly, the original Deathlok. The highlight of "Cyberwar" will be an event that has been the most demanded by **DEATHLOK** fans — the discovery of Deathlok's human body, courtesy of writer Gregory Wright, penciler Walter McDaniel and inker Jimmy Palmiotti.

DEATHLOK



ITEM! Before there was Wolverine, there was Weapon X. And as a result of the 13- part *Weapon X* epic in **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS,** now there's the WEAPON X hardcover edition collecting the entire epic story written, drawn, and, in some places, *lettered* by Barry Windsor Smith. *Weapon X* was one of the most successful sagas ever serialized in MCP, with an exploration of Wolverine's mysterious past. Now, the **WEAPON X** hardcover takes that 120-page look into the enigmatic mutant's origins and presents it in a deluxe collector's edition anthology, priced at $18.95 and set to be released in December, just in time for Christmas.

WEAPON X

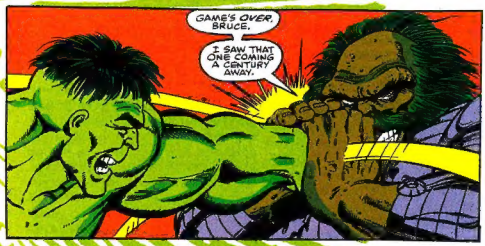
- *Matt Morra*

"WHERE DOES HE GET SUCH WONDERFUL TOYS"

A towering green figure enters a trophy room. Items representative of his time surround him, now deemed "trophies," as their owners have long past away. Wolverine's skeleton, Captain America's shield, the Silver Surfer's board, Iron Man's armor are among the collection that embraces a lone, elderly gentleman who is contentedly playing his harmonica in the center of the room. Rick Jones stops his playing to welcome an old friend to his home. It has been a long time, indeed, since Rick has seen The Hulk, although he could never tell you how long. One's memory, it has been said, fades quickly as one gets older and Rick is one hundred and twenty-five years old.

Thus begins "Future Imperfect," a two-part bookshelf format Hulk story written by Peter David and drawn by George Perez slated to begin in December. "Fans have been clamoring for a special Hulk project for a while," said Bobbie Chase, the editor

future imperfect



of **THE INCREDIBLE HULK.** "Since Peter took over the writing chores five years ago," Bobbie continued, "the popularity of the title has continued to grow. **THE INCREDIBLE HULK** is now at an all time high, so we decided to do something special."

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

The original concept actually goes back about two years, when Peter was making one of his periodic visits to the Marvel offices. "Bobbie showed me some samples of artwork from this new artist and asked me what I thought," Peter recalled. "There was a certain strength in this artist's work of a combo-futuristic feel with a downward spiraling decay. The look just seemed like a possible Hulk future."

Bobbie originally wanted Sam Kieth to do the artwork. Sam had done an extremely well received fill-in issue of **THE HULK** that pitted the jade behemoth against Mr. Hyde. Sam's popularity with fans has only increased thereafter with the spectacular dual-cover art he has been creating for **MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.** Unfortunately, Sam's schedule was full and he had to decline the offer. Bobbie did not want to commit to such a special project without an equally special artist.

"The story floundered for one and a half years," Peter recalled, "when out of the blue, I was talking to George Perez and he mentioned that he would like to work with me. George said that his schedule was freeing," Peter continued, "so I mentioned 'Future Imperfect' to him . George seemed excited and pleased with the offer, but I was in no position to give him the job."

As Peter explains, "Bobbie was thrilled (Peter imitates his version of Bobbie's shrill squeal of excitement). She immediately told Tom DeFalco, who apparently was excited as hell, and said, 'Good work, Bobbie!' Bobbie smiled and said, 'Thank you.'"

HOT CHILD IN THE CITY

"Future Imperfect" takes place in an alter-

nate future of the present - day Hulk. "I twisted the concept of the 'Terminator' movies around, Peter said. "Instead of bringing a character from the future to change the past, I am sending the Hulk ahead in time to change the future." The future, as seen through the eyes of Peter David and George Perez, is a society ravaged with effects of a third world war, one fought with nuclear weapons. Most of civilization has been destroyed. "The only functional city in the United States is 'Dystopia,'" Peter related. "I wasn't trying to peg a particular city when I created the place. I wanted the readers to share in the disorientation that time's Hulk was having." That time's Hulk also happens to be the evil leader controlling Dystopia, who calls himself The Maestro. "He certainly not going to call himself The Leader!" Peter laughed.

"The Maestro's a few bricks short of a full load," he continued. "His past has been destroyed and he has no memories to hold onto, so he loses it. The Hulk soaks up radiation like a sponge," he further explained. "After years of nuclear war, soaking up radiation by the truckloads, he has become a bald-headed, bearded, son of a bitch."

A group of people that call themselves the "Tunnel Rats" oppose The Maestro. "The Tunnel Rats" hang out in the tunnels beneath the city which were built for shelter during the war," Peter explained. "The leader of the Rats is the great granddaughter of Rick Jones. After the group discovers Doctor Doom's Time Machine," he continued, "she convinces her friends that the only one with any hope of out-thinking and out-fighting The Maestro is the Hulk." Thus, a Rat is sent back to retrieve the present-day Hulk to take on The Maestro.

TWO TO TANGO

Although Peter and George have been friends for years, they have never worked together before. "We share an interest in musical theater," George explained. "It's nice reading a straight Peter David plot. He has a great visual sense and he actually describes his fight scenes! One problem I encountered, which is nothing new," George continued, "is that Peter sometimes writes all these great visuals without considering the size of the panels. So I will eliminate some facets while emphasizing others or try to combine a couple of facets together. I've discovered this same problem with all writers, including myself. It's sort of like being a choreographer."

"This story has the distinction of being the longest that I have both penciled and inked," George continued. "I wanted my first collaboration with Peter to be a showpiece. In the second issue there was a great deal of story involved," George noted. "If I had to truncate a fight scene, I would truncate a fight scene. I didn't want to sacrifice any of Peter's story."

"I always liked the Hulk," George Perez recalled. "He was always fun to draw. Looking at Dale (Keown)'s stuff, the guy's even bigger than he was before. Drawing the big, big characters that Marvel is famous for is daunting," George continued. " Even Superman was an average strong guy."

Peter finds working with George an equally rewarding experience. "George brings his own slant and ideas to things," Peter said. "If he comes up with a new way of doing something visually, he respects my ideas enough to call me, probably because he (George) has worked both sides of the fence. He won't just make changes and piss me off."

One example of this teamwork arose when George was drawing the sequence where the present day Hulk meets the future Rick Jones. The scene takes place in the room full of items Rick collected over the years as his friends passed away. "Peter had originally indicated Thor's hammer as one of the items in the room," Bobbie recalled. "George is so great with continuity that he realized immediately that Thor's Hammer couldn't possibly be put in the room, I mean the Hulk couldn't lift it."

"That was the most blackly humorous sequence I have ever written," Peter remarked. "At one point the present-day Hulk asks Rick where Betty is. Pointing over his shoulder to a row of mason jars, Rick replies, 'Over there, between the Wasp and Wonder-Man'"

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Bobbie Chase has been with Peter on **THE HULK** since he started writing the title, first as an assistant editor under the auspices of Bob Harras, then as the title's editor. "Bobbie has turned down higher visibility projects to remain with **THE HULK**," Peter said. "She is very proud of the title. At this point, she has implicit faith in her own story sense to trust my writing. I can approach her with a plot for a particular issue and tell her that it has no action. As long as the story is good," he continued, "she may whimper, but she won't ask me to put in a three page battle sequence with the Pantheon."

This respect works both ways. "Because of her trust," Peter explained, "when she has reservations about a story, I will go back and take another look. When I approached Bobbie about the "Countdown" storyline, she felt it was a one issue story," he recalled, "I said, 'Trust me, Bobbie, four issues will be much more effective.' That story represented a sales turnaround for the title."

With the continued success of **THE INCREDIBLE HULK**, "a special project was long overdue," Bobbie agreed. With the talents of Peter David and George Perez, "Future Imperfect" will be a project worth waiting for. "The story has a great ending," George added, "a logical clever thing that comes out of left field. No one's going to be disappointed."

- Steve Vrattos

Stan's SOAP BOX

Hi, Heroes!

I don't know how many of you remember the Vietnam war? (I almost typed "war" with a capital "W," but caught myself just in time. No way am I gonna glamorize that ugly word!) During those days, most everyone was anti-war, anti-military/industrial complex, and anti- anything that had to do with the establishment!

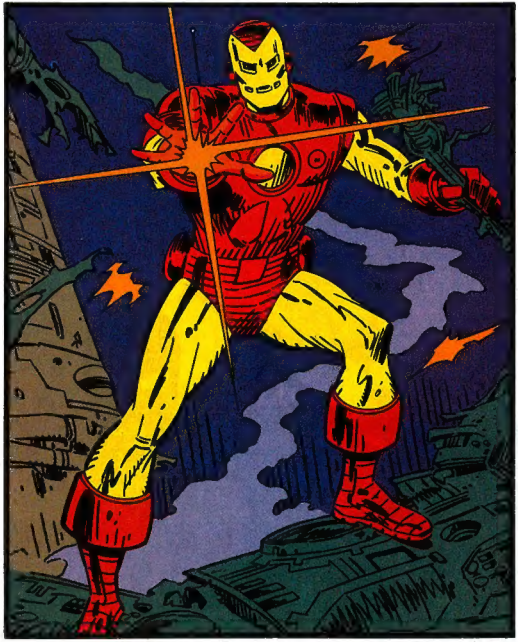
At this point, you're probably muttering to yourself, "What's Light-headed Lee getting at? If I want a history lesson I'll go to the library!" But hang in there, ye of little faith. There's light at the end of the tunnel!

During those high-flyin', hazy, crazy, hippie days, I thought, "Wouldn't it be fun to try to create a super hero who'd start out as the type of guy our readers hate?" Not only would he be a card-carrying member of the establishment, but he'd actually own a munitions factory that made armaments! That's right! He'd be a fact-cat industrialist, one of the greatest supporters of the war effort!

Wow, I figured, if we could carry that off it would be outrageous! Well, you probably guessed the rest. I got together with one of our most awesome artists, the ever-delightful Donny Heck, and lo, IRON MAN was born!

Since this all happened in the early sixties, I guess it's safe to say that ol' Shell-Head (meaning Tony Stark—not Dazzlin' Donny, of course!) was probably the first of comicdom's mechanized, high-tech heroes. It seems awfully old-fashioned now, but I remember how clever I thought we were by referring to Iron Man's armor as being powered by a multitude of mini transistors! Transistors! Today, that's tantamount to talking about a horse and buggy or moustache wax! But hey, in those days we felt like we were on the cutting edge of technology!

As luck would have it, our sly little scheme seemed to work. The Iron Man mag took its place right up there with the rest of mighty Marvel's bombastic best-sellers and the nickname "Shell-Head" became a rallying cry for turned-on transistor-lovers from coast to coast.



One thing that frustrates me is the fact that we didn't have home computers at the time we created Iron Man. If only I had known about such things, just think of all the additional gadgets and gizmos we could have concealed inside of Tony's armor! Imagine the extra miniaturized weaponry and defensive devices we could have dreamed-up, as well as the startling computerized images we could have depicted in our artwork!

But let's face it, we didn't do so badly! We still had Shell-Head flying all over the place by means of the repulser rockets (or whatever it was called then!) at the bottom of his size-twenty booties! And I always got a kick out of all the complex gadgetry which he could drag out at a moment's notice from his metal chest compartment. In fact, I seem to remember that we used to refer to that same metal compartment as Iron Man's medicine chest—that's what it looked like to me! It wouldn't have surprised me if some artist one day drew him opening up that nutty metal door and we'd see a whole kaboodle of aspirin, band-aids and mouthwash on little glass shelves inside!

But let's get savagely serious for a moment! The thing I always liked the most about the super-sophisticated Mr. Stark is the fact that, despite the over-the-top angle of his invincible armored flying suit, his stories were as down to Earth and realistic as any in comics! Tony Stark was a real, flesh-and-blood hero, a guy who lived and loved and had both towering triumphs and dismal defeats.

Remember the series of stories some time back in which Tony fell victim to the agony of alcoholism? Remember when he was down and out, when he had lost his factory, his money, the girl he loved, everything? Remember when things were so out of control for him that his pal Rhodie had to actually replace him as Iron Man? Few heroes in the history of comics have had the amazing ups and downs that Tony Stark has weathered in his three decades as one of Marvel's charismatic coterie of top-selling and consistently popular comic book stars!

So here's to ol' Shell Head! In good times or bad he's never let us down, nor has he ever failed to answer the rousing call of "Avengers Assemble!"

May his armor never tarnish,
Nor his repulsers fail!
May his luster ne'er diminish!
May his glory never pale!

Or, in the hallowed words of Honest Irving Forbush, "Fronti nulla fides!"

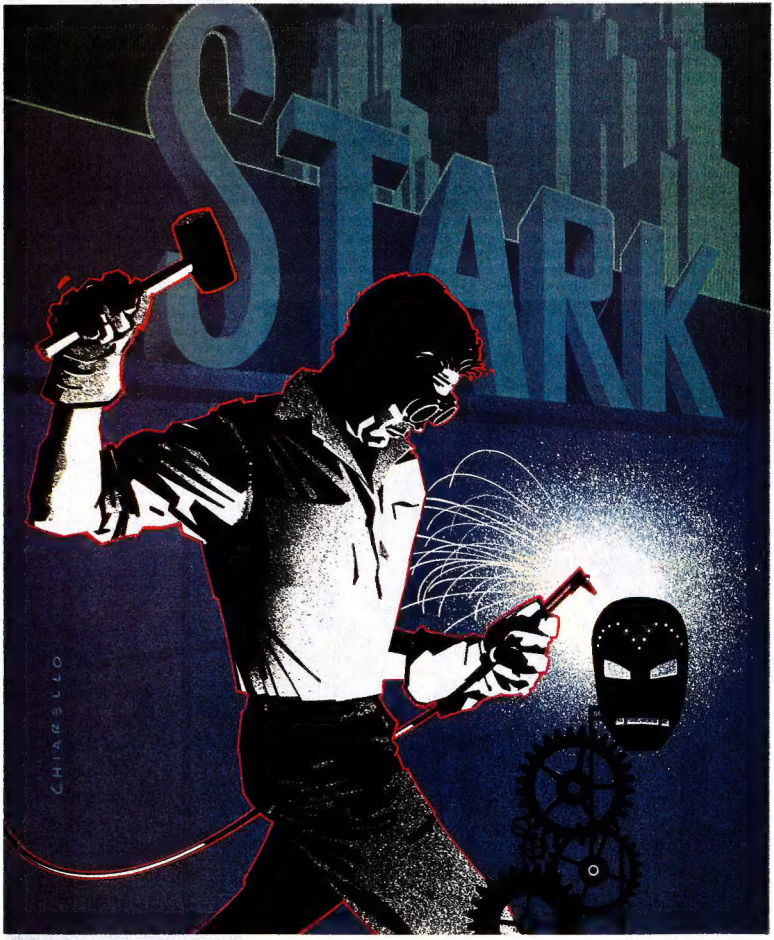
Excelsior!

Stan

- Stan Lee

IRON MAN

THE FUTURE OF THE MAN OF THE FUTURE



You're just a normal person — not even that, really. Your heart's been replaced , your liver's shot due to alcoholism, and your spine has been shattered by an assassin's bullet. But as you climb into the most powerful combat armor in existence, all that becomes irrelevant. You transform.

You are Iron Man.

One of Marvel's classic 'core' characters, Iron Man has had his ups and downs — both figuratively and quite literally — since Stan Lee first introduced him to the world back in 1963. Interest in the Golden Avenger has varied wildly over the years, a variance often correlated to the creative and editorial talent behind him. And while Marvel is celebrating the occasion of Iron Man's 30th anniversary, the **IRON MAN** monthly series has plunged into one of its most intriguing and daring directions yet, firmly guided by Editor Nel Yomtov, writer Len Kaminski, and penciler Kev Hopgood. It may appear that this synchronicity was planned all along, but closer examination of the **IRON MAN** phenomenon reveals the true culprit to be that always-welcome gremlin — a happy coincidence.

"When I took over the book," explained Kaminski, "for the past year's worth of stories, John Byrne had kept talking about Tony Stark dying. Tony Stark is dying, he's definitely, definitely dying. There's no chance he's going to survive.' Byrne had had Stark himself accept this. It seemed like the best thing to do was to have him die."

Though easily the most radical step taken by Kaminski and Yomtov, killing the lead character was by no means the only step. The familiar red-and-gold armor was replaced by the stark, weaponry-laden black-and-white War Machine armor; James "Rhodey" Rhodes is now Iron Man; and a new version of the red-and-gold armor is planned for early next year.

The proof is in the pudding: since Kaminski and new regular penciler Kevin Hopgood have started their **IRON MAN** run, interest in the series has skyrocketed.

MARKETING THE METAL

The fact that these events are occurring just in time for Iron Man's 30th anniversary is, as mentioned, not lost on Marvel's marketing department. "We saw that we had an opportunity — both in the new direction and the fact that it is the character's 30th anniversary — to focus a lot of attention to a character who's been overlooked over the years," asserted Marvel Marketing Manager Sven Larsen. "**IRON MAN** has been sort of a neglected book for a while. Now Len Kaminski and Kevin Hopgood are doing this major revamp of the character, placing him very solidly in the 90's. We felt that that, combined with the opportunity of the 30th anniversary, gave us a chance to expose the character to a large number of people who had either read **IRON MAN** and given up on it, or who had never been exposed to the character in the first place."

The Iron Man promotional push is an ambitious effort which will be implemented over the entire 30th anniversary year. It starts with **IRON MAN #288**, on sale this November, a double-sized issue celebrating the 350th appearance of Iron Man in his own title. (This includes his solo features in **TALES OF SUSPENSE**, a one-shot, and his current **IRON MAN** run.) Issue #288 will receive a special silver foil cover featuring the War Machine armor.

Following closely will be another special issue, **IRON MAN #290**, on sale in January of 1993, the month of the Golden Avenger's 30th anniversary. Another double-sized issue with a special cover, #290 will feature gold foil to accentuate the brand-new, red-and-gold armor of **IRON MAN**. Other anniversary events occur throughout 1992 and 1993, including the very first Iron Man **MARVEL MASTERWORKS**, the **IRON MANUAL** (a technical guide to the armor), **THE MANY ARMORS OF IRON MAN** trade paperback and two upcoming graphic novels.

Things will come to a head in November 1993, as **IRON MAN #300** hits the stands, "most likely" sporting a hologram cover, according to Larsen. "We're hoping to be able to do some stuff with the holograms and their backgrounds to make them even nicer than the stuff we did with Spider-Man last year."

"Part of the guiding philosophy behind our special covers is that we use them to draw attention to important editorial events," Larsen explained, "and that's what we're trying to do here — to take some of the special things we're doing and point out to people just how radically changed a book **IRON MAN** is. Just knowing that there were all these exciting things coming up in **IRON MAN** definitely spurred us on to make sure that we had some stuff from our area that would keep people interested and ensure that the character receive the time in the spotlight that he deserves."

A HERO'S DEATH

Iron Man's been in and out of editor Nel Yomtov's personal spotlight for years. His first memories of the metal-clad hero harken back to the mid-70's Gene Colan era, after which Yomtov "wandered away" from comics in general. He picked up **IRON MAN** again during the first run of Bob Layton in the early 1980's.

"I had a habit of reading Marvel books for eight, ten months, and then dropping them and picking up another title just to see what was going on in the Marvel Universe," Yomtov recalled. "But **IRON MAN** was one where I did get hooked into it; I stayed on for quite a run. It had a number of different writers and artists, as you know, and I was always interested to see who brought what to it."

Yomtov, who is also one of the industry's more respected colorists, was hired by Marvel in 1990 to be an editor. He eventually inherited several Marvel Universe titles, including **IRON MAN**. "When I took over **IRON MAN**, John Byrne was in the middle of a series with Fin Fang Foom, and Iron Man was remote controlling a suit of armor," he remembered. "Rhodey was also in a suit of armor, fighting the dragon and the Mandarin. John wanted to finish up his series with a two-part Black Widow bit. It was my job to find a replacement for him."

Yomtov solicited proposals from several different writers. "Len seemed to have the most active, aggressive, out-there-on-the-edge kind of super hero that we think fans respond to these days."

And what kind of hero is that? "I think a guy who's not afraid to mix it up — not quite the Punisher type, Tony is a man of intense scruples and integrity — but Len's idea was to push the character to his physical limit and to do something quickly with that, and to resolve that issue of his illness. And Len just had a real aggressive posture toward the character that I thought was needed. The book needed a kick in the pants.

> "It seemed like the best thing to do was to have him die."

Kaminski began to deliver that kick immediately — almost too hard. "Nel's been generally very receptive to everything I've wanted to do," he commented, adding with a wry half-grin, "I kind of scare him sometimes. When I first started working on this storyline, I went up to him and said, 'Hey, Nel, how many issues do you think Tony Stark should be dead for — four or six?' And his first reaction was, 'Dead? *Dead?!* You're going to *kill* my character?!' Then I explained it to him and he thought it was a good idea."

Yomtov was apprehensive, both with the long-term ramifications for

the character and the potential for skeptical reader reaction. "I could never possibly believe that the readers would accept the fact that this old line hero was dead," Yomtov said. "So Len Kaminski came up with what I thought to be kind of a far-fetched idea of killing the character off — but letting the fans know he's really not dead. Within the story, his team of researchers and physicians knows he's *not* dead, but his best friend and everyone else in the Marvel Universe accept the fact that he's dead, because he was in a degenerative state for so long. So we're in on this little secret, and we think that's a nice twist."

Kaminski echoed that sentiment. "Since we'll never fool the readers into thinking he's dead, we'll let them in on it. So, hopefully, it will be like the classic Alfred Hitchcock example of the bomb under the table, where the audience knows something the other characters don't, and they're anticipating what will happen when the other characters find out."

PERCHANCE TO DREAM

While this bold new concept certainly raises many eyebrows, it also beggars the potentially embarrassing question: What's going to *happen* in **IRON MAN** while Tony Stark is effectively dead?

"They chill Stark's body down to about 40 degrees Kelvin, and at that temperature a lot of weird things happen," Kaminski explained. "Physics don't exactly change, but they mutate. Certain materials become superconductors, which means that they allow electricity to flow through with no resistance. No one really knows for sure what happens to a human brain at that temperature; it's as valid as anything else to say, 'Well, at 40 degrees Kelvin, human brain tissue becomes a superconductor, since what the brain does is process electricity.'"

"And perhaps, if you had someone frozen at that temperature, their brain would become active again. Being in a cryogenic container, without any sensory input, he'd probably end up in the same kind of situation as people who have been in sensory deprivation experiments, in which case people go through very hallucinatory episodes, often involving memories of their past."

And what of Iron Man? "In the meantime Rhodey is beating the hell out of people as Iron Man," Kaminski revealed, adding, "I see Rhodey as a very well-balanced, very confident, self-assured guy. And we don't get to see characters like that get into super hero costumes very often. He doesn't go through a lot of terrible angst over his role; he sees a job that needs to be done and he does it.

"As the storyline is going along, he starts to feel — as any normal person would — that the job of being both Iron Man and the head of Stark Enterprises is a terrible burden. And the down side of him being so well-adjusted is that he is not driven to do this kind of job the way somebody with more character flaws might be. You know, someone like Spider-Man is very neurotic but he has an inner drive to do what he does make the sacrifices he makes. Rhodey doesn't have that; he's pretty much a normal guy, and he's got this immensely heavy burden that's thrust on him. And he does a good job with it, but as time goes by he begins to think, 'Well, now I know why Tony Stark used to drink so much.'"

Yomtov, admittedly hesitant at first, is now elated. "I'm really optimistic about the book. One of the reasons I was skeptical when Len said, 'Let's put Tony on ice literally and have The Adventures of Rhodey in the War Machine Armor,' was that I was concerned that we wouldn't be able to get a lot of mileage out of Tony Stark, who is the real hero of the book. But what we've done is take the opportunity while Tony's been in a freeze to have him, in flashback form, relive his life.

"It gives us a real good way of giving the Tony Stark background which has never been revealed in all these years."

MAN IN THE MACHINE

While neither Nel Yomtov nor Len Kaminski may have created Iron Man, they both have similar opinions as to the secret of his popularity. . .a fact which may in itself account for the apparent ease with which they are injecting new life into this venerable character.

"He was one of the only characters, especially in those early years, who in and of himself had no super powers, and in fact had a great affliction that had him at death's doorstep," Yomtov pointed out. "It was his inventiveness and his genius that made him a super hero, and not any kind of bizarre accident that imbued him with certain powers or abilities. So I saw him more as the cause and sustenance of his super heroism than a Peter Parker who, quite by accident, fell into the role of having to be a super hero."

Kaminski more than agrees. "I guess it's just the idea of being able to put on this suit of armor and become physically powerful. You know, as a kid, I was a complete wimp, I was the smallest kid in my class. To a certain extent all comics, especially super hero comics, are wish-fulfillment stories. With Iron Man, it was just the idea that Tony Stark would put on this suit to go from being a weakling and an invalid to a human fighting machine. Tony Stark was not that different from me; he was not from Krypton, he was a regular human being who was actually physically sub-normal."

It is Stark's weaknesses, Kaminski maintained, that make him and his Iron Man alter ego so engaging. And not all of those weaknesses are mere physical ones. "Tony keeps everyone pretty much at arm's length, and tends to deal with people in a very sort of mechanistic way," Kaminski observed. "It's not a conscious thing on his part, but that's the way he deals with everything — by approaching it as if it were an engineering problem.

> "All in all, Tony Stark is probably more powerful than Iron Man is."

That's why Tony never had a positive romantic relationship, and he's had very few lasting friendships. Tony might be a scientific genius, but he's not a very good human being.

"Tony Stark's going to be reliving a lot of events from his past with the current perspective, and he'll be seeing how things that happened to him when he was five are still affecting him now. He's going to come out of this, if not a different person, at least with a very different viewpoint on who he is. He may repair one set of character flaws, and end up with a different set. Basically, he's going to become more self-aware. But becoming aware that you have a character flaw doesn't necessarily fix it."

THE HERO FOR THE 90'S?

Like many writers, Kaminski has serious issues he wishes to address in his work. His IRON MAN is much more than a robotic slugfest. "We're in the last decade of the 20th century," Kaminski stated. "The decisions that will affect the next 500 years, at least, are going to be made with regard to the interaction of human beings with technology: whether we'll end up with a situation that's beneficial for humans, with humans aided by technology; or humans to a certain extent enslaved by technology."

"In a very short period of time we'll be able to plug people directly into computer circuits and have their nervous systems interface with artificial intelligence systems. It's in the next ten or twenty years that we're going to be making policy decisions as to what will be involved in that.

"Then there're issues like nuclear power, new weapons, biological engineering. . .in another twenty years we'll have a complete map of the human genome, and probably not long after that we'll have some idea of how to alter it intentionally and rewrite the genetic code. Somebody's got to be making ethical decisions now about how all this will be used. Who will be responsible? Who will they be answerable to?

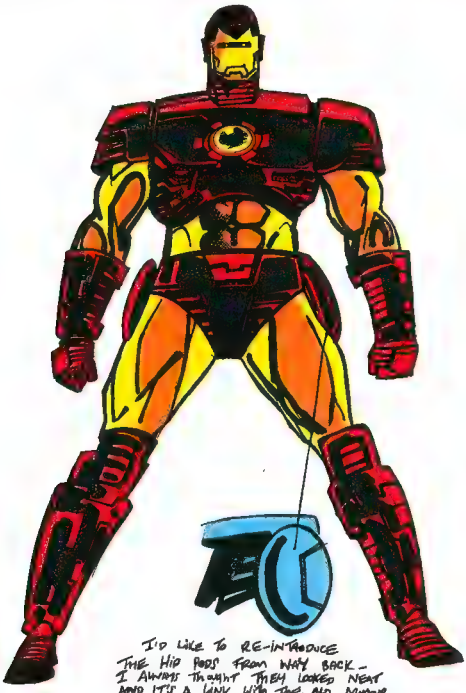
"And I think Iron Man is a very good character to examine these things through, not just because he's a super hero with a technological base, but because Tony Stark is the type of person who's making these kinds of decisions in the real world right now. He's in charge of a company that deals with biotechnology, that deals with electronics and computers, hardware and software, pretty much all things on the cutting edge of science, and he's the guy in charge of the company. So what he says goes."

Is Tony Stark the kind of person Kaminski would want to see make those decisions? "Well, that's one of the things I want to explore. In the past, I'm not sure he's been the type the character and the potential for skeptical reader reaction. "I could never possibly believe that the readers would accept the fact that this old line hero was dead," Yomtov said. "So Len Kaminski came up with what I thought to be kind of a far-fetched idea of killing the character off — but letting the fans know he's really not dead. Within the story, his team of person I'd want to do that — certainly he's better than some, but I think he's gone about his business, to a certain extent, kind of blindly. In the future I'm having him examine these issues a little more closely. Sometime around issue #300, I'm going to probably have him come up with a drastic change in Stark Enterprises policies. I'm going to put him through situations that will make him become more aware that he has this responsibility, and start accounting for it.

"All in all, Tony Stark is probably more powerful than Iron Man is. If Iron Man defeats Ultimo, that's a certain number of people in some small town who are saved from being stepped on by Ultimo. But if Tony Stark decides to put $5 billion into his biotechnology department, that's going to affect everybody on Earth.

"We're on the verge of human beings and technology becoming more and more closely involved, and Iron Man is a perfect example of that. In the storylines I'm working on now, we're going to see Tony Stark become very intimately involved with technology — from the inside out. I want to see what some of the results of that are."

And with the results so far, Yomtov can't help but be ecstatic. "The stories are being carried off really well," he beamed. "One of the highest compliments I could've passed on to Len was that several people, having read the book, told me, 'I read the whole issue without even realizing that Tony Stark hadn't thrown a punch at anybody.' That really pleased me."



Tom TALKS

At the San Diego Comic-Con Marvel Booth with Mark Bagley and Danny Fingeroth (right); a Spider-Man anniversary panel with Tom DeFalco, Mark Bagley and friend (below).

Photograph by Steve Saffel

"This Convention, This Monster!"

By the time you read these words, the summer will be a fading memory, and I'll be returning from a grand tour of the unofficial Comic Book Convention Circuit.

At their best, comic book conventions are a joyous celebration of our wonderful medium, filled with interesting people, stimulating conversations and intriguing sights. At their worst, they're an awful lot like being stuck in a crowded bus station, with all the attendant pushing, shoving and garbled announcements.

Quite a few of the ever-faithful show up to these events with a single, all-encompassing goal in mind. . .to break into the comic book business. Anxious expressions on their faces, they line up with their portfolios, waiting patiently, sometimes for hours, in the hope that some editor will find their work worthy of publication.

I've often wondered what these people think of those of us behind the convention tables. Do we appear as cruel monsters who callously rule upon their fate, deciding on whim who shall be worthy of this medium, and who shall be denied its glories? How dare we rule upon their hours of hard work and a lifetime of dreams after a mere two minutes under an unsympathetic glare?

Okay, people, let's get something straight: editors go to comic book conventions because we want to be there. We do not get paid to go to these shows. We receive no additional compensation for working when we could be goofing off. (Think of all the people you know who enjoy their jobs and customers so much that they'll happily work an extra weekend for free! Not many, huh?)

Why do we do it? Simple — we like our readers. We respect them, are thrilled to meet them, and are anxious to hear their opinions. We want to know what's working in our comics, and what's not. (I'm constantly asking people the title of their favorite comic book. While I hope the answer is something published by Marvel, I note anything that isn't, and usually give it a try.)

Most comic book editors are fans as well. We like to walk around the dealers room, filling in our personal collections, and seeing what's new.

We also like to socialize with our fellow pros. Many of our friends in the business live in different cities, and we only get to see each other at these shows. We also get to meet new writers and artists, many of whose work we have long admired.

And, mainly, editors go because they're always looking to discover new talent. But, the new talent had better be aware of certain harsh realities.

First, make sure your art samples are appropriate for the type of editor you're approaching. (An artist recently showed me water colors of tulips, and wanted to know if I thought he had a future drawing super hero comics. ARRGH!)

Also, contrary to what certain industry superstars would have you believe. . .editors are people. And people have to get up for panels, race to previous appointments, go to the bathroom, get hungry, grow tired, and take the occasional break. Our eyes have even been known to grow blurry after we've seen one portfolio too many. In other words, don't expect every editor to be willing to look at your samples wherever and whenever you chose to show them. (At the Marvel table, we usually set up specific times to prevent us from being overwhelmed by the sheer deluge of submissions.)

In addition, each one of us has personal likes, dislikes, levels of critical judgment, skill, craft and knowledge. Everyone also has a different ability to verbalize their criticism. I can look at a page of pencils, discuss its layouts and the artist's ability to use pictures to tell a story. I cannot tell anyone how to draw better, improve anatomy, or learn perspective.

Inking is my worse subject. I can briefly discuss the purpose and philosophical basis of inking, and a few obvious techniques, but a potential inker would do better with almost anyone else.

When it comes to coloring, I can more easily discuss the craft on a philosophical basis than on a practical one.

Writing is a problem — a major problem! One of the great inequities of our industry is that artists can be hired on the basis of his samples, but a writer can only sell a story after he has written one. (Just because you can write one great Banana Man story, it doesn't mean you can write a second or third.)

Another great inequity is that no one can read a plot or a story during a noisy convention with any level of

Photographs by Jackie Estrada

An impromptu autograph session by Stan Lee himself (left); Bob Harras reviews the portfolio of an aspiring artist (bottom left); and the NEW WARRIORS team of Darick Robertson and Fabian Nicieza (below) sign books for their eager readers.

concentration. It's totally impossible! And, for a variety of reasons, no one really wants to carry any plots home from a convention. (When it comes time to pack my travel bag, my clothes and personal items enter first. . . samples only accompany me if there's sufficient room. If not, they are left behind. I know it's cold and cruel, but I'm not going to sacrifice my stuff for someone's samples. They should have enough faith in their abilities to invest in the necessary postage, and mail it to me.)

New writers are often shoving their work in my face, trying to con me into reading them overnight. They don't realize that I usually spend my convention nights having business meetings, going out to dinner with friends, or partying like crazy. When I was a regular editor, instead of the idiot in chief, I often read plots late into the wee hours of the morning. It was a necessary part of the job, but I hated it. . .especially on weekends. I still do. Reading a plot is work. It requires real concentration and critical judgment. No one wants to work through the night when he's at a convention. No one!

What's a writer to do? He/or she should introduce him/herself to all of the editors, find out the type of material they're currently looking for, and inform the appropriate ones that a story will soon be winging its way to them. The writer should also get the necessary submission guidelines, and make certain that his/her submission is properly, neatly and professionally prepared.

If you've learned your craft properly, and written an intriguing story. . . you may actually sell it!

And, if you do happen to run across me at an upcoming comic book celebration, feel free to stop by and say "hello." I'll be glad you did.

Thanks for being there!

- Tom DeFalco

THE BOSSMEN by RICK PARKER

GOOD NEWS!
NOW THAT I'VE HIRED SOME NEW EDITORS--
--YOUR WORKLOAD SHOULD LIGHTEN UP..
..IN FACT--
--IF ALL GOES AS EXPECTED--
--YOU SHOULD ALL BE ABLE TO GO HOME FOR A FULL FOUR HOURS EACH NIGHT!

EPICENTER

Tuesday, March 23 marked an "epic" day for the Marvel staffers as the Bullpenners played host to storyteller/artist extraordinaire MOEBIUS, who was in the Big Apple attending local conventions and an autograph signing at a NYC comic shop.

With him were the Lofficiers—Jean Marc and Randy—who have collaborated with Moebius on many of his United States projects under the Starwatcher Graphics banner. Moebius had time to chat with the Marvel staff, signing autographs and doing some quick sketches, before meeting with Epic personalities Carl Potts, Marie Javins and Chris Cooper.

The powwow focused on Moebius projects currently in the works at Epic: METALLIC MEMORIES and AIRTIGHT GARAGE. Both titles feature the boundless imagination and energy of the French-born creator.

METALLIC MEMORIES, the second installment of the Moebius gift book series, is a broad spectrum presentation of Moebius's musings in text and illustration. AIRTIGHT GARAGE is the four-issue science fiction/fantasy series (originally presented in graphic novel form) recounting the tale of a French explorer—Major Grubert—operating in a world of incredible fantasy as only Moebius can concoct. "It's very 'new agey,'" according to series Editor Marie Javins. "It's a great experiment for the Epic line," she added.

Moebius's appearance sparked the Bullpen to new heights of excitement. MARVEL AGE designer Mike Kraiger, a big Moebius fan, was delighted to see the man he described as "a gentleman, and the fastest artist alive."

—Nel Yomtov

Photographs by Ed Lazellari

MARVEL 2099
by Joey Cavalieri, Arthur Nichols and Ken Lopez
THE PUBLIC EYE NAILED A COUPLE OF DRUG DEALERS HANGING AROUND CORPORATE DAY CARE CENTER.
THE EYE HAD THEM UNDER SURVEILLANCE FOR THREE HOURS. SENT IN A DECOY TO MAKE THE BUY.
RESULT: ONE OUNCE OF RAPTURE.
ALL RIGHT, THE RATIO OF MANPOWER TO RESULTS MIGHT NOT BE STACKED IN THE EYE'S FAVOR...
BUT EVEN IF THEY HAD OUR RESOURCES, WHO COULD DO A BETTER JOB?

№ 1828
ADMIT ONE
William Shatner's
Tekworld
Saturday, August 15
1:30 P.M.
at the 1992 San Diego
Comic Convention
Seating will begin at 1:00 P.M. Tickets will be honored until 1:25 P.M. After that, seating will be on a space available basis.
MARVEL COMICS
Courtesy of
Marvel Comics

Photographs by Steve Saffel

Twenty thousand comics fans passed through the portals of the San Diego Convention Center (above) for the annual Comic-Con. Once inside, they were greeted by celebrities of every size and shape, including Stimpy (below) of Nickelodeon's *The Ren and Stimpy Show*

The fans meet the gang at the Marvel Comics booth (front to back) Scott Lobdell, Carl Potts, Peter David, Joey Cavalieri and Barbara Slate.

Diego

Photograph by Chris Ng

Douglas Ellithorpe and Keith McGee (right) took away the "Best Marvel Costume" prize at the Comic Con Masquerade, writer Scott Lobdell and Editor Carl Potts (below) gave fans the inside scoop at the Marvel Comics display

Picture yourself in Southern California. It's warm and sunny and you're surrounded by 20,000 people who, like you, will travel thousands of miles for one spectacular event. You're at the San Diego Comic-Con.

In case you weren't one of the thousands who visited the San Diego convention center for the 23rd annual gathering, here's a taste of that memorable four-day event, with something for everyone.

Besides a 125,000 square foot exhibit hall holding approximately 500 different booths, there were panels and workshops, autograph sessions, film screenings, gaming rooms, Japanese animation, and M.C. Escher exhibit, the Robert A. Heinlein Memorial Blood Drive, the Inkpot Awards Banquet, and spectacular parties and dances.

Marvel's activities at the Con were action packed. On Thursday, there was "Mondo Marvel Truth or Dare," a manic game show hosted by Master of Ceremonies Mark Gruenwald. Friday featured the "Marvel Conventions Bulletin," a sneak preview and slide show of new projects, including **Marvel 2099** and **REN AND STIMPY.**

Saturday's star-studded daytime events included "Spider-Man, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," a celebration of the web-slinger's 30th anniversary with panelists Mark Bagley, Tom DeFalco, Danny Fingeroth, John Romita, and Spider-Man himself. In a keynote address, horror master Clive Barker announced his newest projects (including Epic's upcoming "Barkerverse" titles), and a crowd of nearly 2,000 showed up to hear William Shatner, Ron Goulart and Fabian Nicieza discuss **TEKWORLD,** Epic's series based on the best-selling novels.

This year's Will Eisner Industry

awards were presented Saturday afternoon, and Marvel's winners included: best humor publication — **GROO THE WANDERER** by Sergio Aragones and Mark Evanier; best colorist — Steve Oliff for AKIRA; and best writer/artist team — Peter David and Dale Keown for **THE INCREDIBLE HULK.**

Saturday night's masquerade at Copley Symphony Hall featured some outstanding costumes, including Marvel Special Award Winners Douglas Ellithorpe and Keith McGee as Spider-Man and Kraven the Hunter, and Robert Perez (also voted Best Young Fan) as Iron Man: War Machine. A duo portraying Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* took the masquerade's top honors.

On Sunday, the "Marvel Fun and Games Show" continued the mayhem with the Marvel Madmen.

Other luminaries spotted at Marvel's booth or elsewhere around the Con included special guest Stan Lee, Bob Budiansky, Joey Cavalieri, Bobbie Chase, Ralph Macchio, Howard Mackie, Marcus McLaurin, Carl Potts and Marvel President Terry Stewart. The exhibit hall booths offered everything from trading cards to movie posters to comics — thousands of comics! Many booths offered giveaways and drawings for great prizes and on "Artists' Alley" illustrators sketched and sold original artwork, with an art show and auction set up nearby.

Whether you're a collector in search of a rare back issue, a writer or artist trying to line up a future project, or someone just looking for an unforgettable way to spend a long summer weekend, mark August 19-22 on your 1993 calendar. The Comic-Con committee promises next year's extravaganza will be even bigger and better.

– Dana C. Hayward

Photographs by Steve Saffel

At a special presentation (above), William Shatner and Fabian Nicieza detailed plans for the new Epic Comics series WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWORLD. Robert Perez (left) received a special Marvel award for his "Iron Man War Machine" costume in the Masquerade; and most of the the Marvel crew (below) marshalled their forces for the insanity of "Mondo Marvel: Truth or Dare," hosted by the executive lunatic, Mark Gruenwald

SUMMER '92

THE SPINOFF! A GRAND AND GLORIOUS TRADITION THAT HARKENS BACK TO THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS. THE PUNISHER FIRST LOADED UP WITHIN THE PAGES OF THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN; WOLVERINE CLAWED HIS WAY INTO VIEW INITIALLY BY FIGHTING THE HULK; AND NOMAD? NOMAD ISN'T AN ISLAND--HE GOT HIS START WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA! AND HOW ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR? WITH THE SILVER SURFER, DR. DOOM, THE INHUMANS, AND THE BLACK PANTHER--AMONG OTHERS--TO THEIR CREDIT--THEY HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED THE CHAMPS IN THE MARVEL STAR SEARCH SWEEPSTAKES. BUT THERE ISN'T A FIRST GENERATION SUPERSTAR WHO HASN'T CONTRIBUTED HIS SHARE OF WORTHY NEWCOMERS TO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, AND OL' SHELLHEAD IS NO EXCEPTION. YES, FANS, OUR TOPIC TODAY IS

IRON MAN: HE KNEW 'EM WHEN!!

HI GANG! IT'S ME, YOUR OLD PAL, IRON MAN aka TONY STARK, BILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST AND PART TIME TALENT SCOUT! Y'KNOW, FOLKS DON'T GENERALLY RECALL THIS ABOUT ME, BUT I'VE HAD THE RARE OPPERTUNITY TO INTRODUCE A HANDFUL OF MIGHTY IMPRESSIVE CHARACTERS TO YOU, THE MARVEL COMICS FAN, OVER THE YEARS. FACT IS, SOME OF YOU YOUNGER FOLKS ARE BOUND TO BE SURPRISED AT SOME OF THE BIG NAMES THAT HAVE DEBUTED IN MY STRIP IN THE PAST...

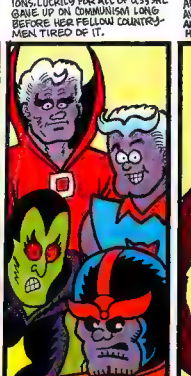
FOR INSTANCE, DR. STRANGE--HOW'S THAT FOR A BIG NAME? UNFORTUNATELY, IT WASN'T STEPHEN STRANGE, THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, BUT INSTEAD SOME CRACKPOT SCIENTIST BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION AS A PLOY TO WIN HIS TEENAGE DAUGHTER'S LOVE!! HEY FELLA, YOU SHOULD'VE JUST BOUGHT HER A FANCY SPORTSCAR LIKE ANY FOOLS DID FOR MEASTER BEATING THIS SORRY SPECIMEN IN Tales of Suspense #41, May 1963, NEITHER HE NOR HIS DAUGHTER WAS EVER HEARD FROM AGAIN, AND A MERE TWO MONTHS LATER, THE SORCEROR SUPREME MADE HIS DEBUT. COINCIDENCE? YOU BE THE JUDGE.

THE PREMIER OF THE U.I.S.A. HIMSELF SENT THE NOTORIOUS MADAME NATASHA AFTER BOTH IRON MAN AND TONY STARK BACK IN Tales of Suspense #52, April 1964. FAR FROM THE SLEEKLY GARBED ADVENTURESS YOU'RE ALL NO DOUBT FAMILIAR WITH TODAY, IN HER INITIAL APPEARANCES, THE BLACK WIDOW WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A GAUDILY DRESSED FEMME FATALE WITH, RELYING ON MORE SUBTLE WILES THAN KUNG FU TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN HER ESPIONAGE MISSIONS. LUCKILY FOR ALL OF US, SHE GAVE UP ON COMMUNISM LONG BEFORE HER FELLOW COUNTRYMEN TIRED OF IT.

HAWKEYE THE BOWMAN ATTEMPTED TO JOIN THE RANKS OF FORTUNED ADVENTURERS IN Tales of Suspense #57, Sept. 1964, ONLY TO HAND THE POLICE MISTAKE HIS INTENTIONS DURING HIS FIRST NIGHT OUT, AND SUBSEQUENTLY BRAND HIM A CRIMINAL. MINING MATTERS MORE, HE STUMBLED INTO THE AFOREMENTIONED BLACK WIDOW'S WEB, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THE DUO OF US WERE SLOGGING IT OUT! BUT, Y'KNOW, I COULD TELL-- HE WAS GOOD-BAD, NOT EVIL. SO WITHIN A YEAR I FOUND MYSELF SPONSORING THE ARCHER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE AVENGERS. I THOUGHT CAPTAIN AMERICA WOULD NEVER LET ME HEAR THE END OF IT!!

by FRED HEMBECK

MOONDRAGON YOU SAY? WELL, YES AND NO. WHEN SHE WAS THE BEHIND THE SCENES FORCE THAT INSTIGATED A BATTLE BETWEEN MYSELF AND THE SUB-MARINER IN THE PAGES OF Iron Man #56, January 1973, SHE WENT BY AN EVEN GOOFIER NAME (YES, GOOFIER THAN "MOONDRAGON"): MADAME MAH-EVIL. !! (OID I LIE TO YOU?) SHE SOON DITCHED THAT RED OUTFIT FOR A GREEN ONE JUST LIKE IT, AND HOOKED UP WITH A GROUP OF FOLKS FROM SATURN'S LARGEST MOON, TITAN. APPARENTLY, ONE THING SHE DIDN'T CHANGE WAS HER HAIR STYLIST...



SPEAKING OF WHICH... IT WAS ONE MONTH LATER IN Iron Man #57 WHEN A YOUNG JIM STARLIN, IN ONE OF HIS EARLIEST PLOTTING AND PENCILLING JOBS FOR MARVEL, UTILIZED THE OPPERTUNITY TO INTRODUCE THE BOYS FROM TITAN: DRAX THE DESTROYER, EROS (aka STARFOX), MENTOR, AND EVERY-ONES FAVORITE, THANOS. WHO COULD'VE KNOWN THAT FROM THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS OF THAT SINGLE ISSUE TALE, JIM WOULD GO ON TO FEATURE THOSE CHARACTERS IN A SERIES OF THRILLING, DRAMATIC, AND... INFINITE STORIES??

AND WHO KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR SQUIRREL GIRL, THE ADOLESCENT MUTANT WHO LOBBIED TO BECOME MY PARTNER IN Marvel Super Heroes #8, Jan 1992? I TOLD HER I DIDN'T NEED A 15 YEAR OLD SIDEKICK, EVEN ONE WHO MANAGED TO DEFEAT DR. DOOM WITH THE HELP OF SQUIRRELS, BUT MAYBE I WAS TOO HASTY. SHE MIGHT BE THE NEXT MUTANT SENSATION, LIKE CABLE. AFTER ALL, I DOUBT HE COULD GET SQUIRRELS TO HELP HIM STOP THE JUGGERNAUT! SHE MUST'VE BEEN RIGHT WHEN SHE TOLD ME THERE WAS POWER IN NUTS!

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REMAKING

SECRETS OF THE IRON MAN MASTERWORKS

Step-by-Step

Once it was determined to re-create the Iron Man tale from TALES OF SUSPENSE #50, photocopies were made from a beat-up copy of the actual finished comic book (this page and next).

These oversized copies were then sent to a letterer, and to artist Don Heck. Using vellum, letterer Diana Albers re-lettered the captions and dialogue to match the exact size and shape of the original boxes and balloons (next page - right).

At the same time, penciler/inker Don Heck re-inked the artwork in the same style he used on the original, 29 years ago (third page - left).

The end result was a perfectly re-created Iron Man adventure (third page - right) re-colored by Nel Yomtov for inclusion in the first MARVEL MASTERWORKS hardcover volume collecting the early tales of the Armored Avenger!

HISTORY

Artist Don Heck recently boarded a time machine of sorts, and returned for a visit to the year 1963. Don had been asked to recreate his artwork for the Iron Man story that had originally appeared in **TALES OF SUSPENSE #50** for inclusion in a hardcover "Marvel Masterworks" volume 29 years later!

The travel agent for Don's temporal jaunt was Tom Brevoort, editor of the current "Marvel Masterworks" collections. When he and Editor-in-Chief Tom DeFalco decided it was high time that the early Iron Man adventures be collected between hardcovers, Brevoort did what he normally does after the contents of a given volume have been decided upon. "I contacted Marvel's Repro Department," Tom said. "They have a warehouse that, in theory, contains proofs of all the books going back to the 1960's." However, the black-and-white photostats necessary for the reproduction of this never-before-reprinted tale — Iron Man's first confrontation with his most persistent foe, the dreaded Mandarin — were nowhere to be found. Tom concluded that they had been lost or stolen, or perhaps, in the harried days of the early Marvel Bullpen, they had never been made at all.

At this point, there was a very real danger that this historic story would be lost to all but those fortunate enough to possess a fragile copy of the original comic book. "But the consensus was that it would be nice to see this story again," Tom said.

That's when Tom called Don Heck, legendary artist for many classic Iron Man and Avengers sagas, and offered him a trip back into his own past. He asked Don to attempt to recreate his own artwork from 29 years earlier by tracing over enlarged photostats shot from a decaying copy of the original comic, doing so, as accurately as possible, on sheets of semi-transparent vellum.

"I didn't even think about it that much when we first talked," Don said, "but when it came in, it felt funny doing something that was 30 years old, especially as they asked me to reproduce it the same as it was. . .I had to keep myself from changing and fixing. Look at something you've drawn only a few months ago. Is it perfect? You look at it and only see the mistakes."

Tom supplied Don with two sets of enlarged stats. One set was 14" x 21", the size of the larger art paper used in the early sixties. The other was 11" x 17", the size of most art drawn for comics today. Don chose to work from the smaller stats, because, as he put it, "First of all, I'm used to it these days, and second, I would have had to piece the tracing paper together (to work on the larger size stats) and that would have been trouble." Still, Don related that he had difficulty discerning fine detail through the vellum. Fortunately, he had a proof copy of the printed comic they had sent him back in 1963. "When I got down to the small details, I had that

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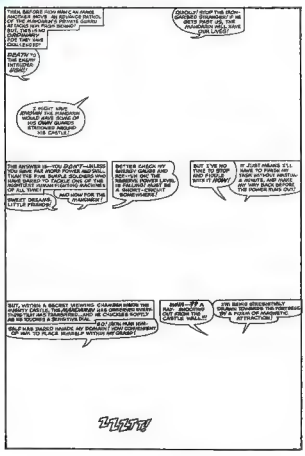


next to me. . .I'd flip the vellum to see how close I came," Don explained. Asked if he tried to duplicate the inking tools he had used on the original job, Don lamented, "You can't get those old, good Gilotte 291s they used to have; the brushes are the same, Windsor-Newton series 7, but the pen points these days normally aren't that great."

While re-creating the artwork, Don's mind naturally traveled back to the time in which he originally created it. He remembered working on this particular job at a home he had rented on Fire Island that summer of 1963. "It reminded me of when I got out the hammer and nails and built the second-car garage on that house," Don remarked with surprising fondness. Of course, he also reminisced about the early Marvel bullpen, saying, "There were only about four of us (artists) around. . .Steve Ditko, myself, Dick Ayers and Jack Kirby — maybe one or two others. (In those days) whatever was needed was what you did."

Don, who spent a major portion of his career chronicling the adventures of the armored Avenger, recalled the beginning of his association with Iron Man, saying proudly, "I did the first one!" He mentioned that some believe Jack Kirby did layouts for that first Iron Man story, but "Jack did the cover and I did the inside." Kirby did do layouts for the next job, because "I probably got behind again, as usual," he said, laughing. "Jack designed the costume, because he did the cover first. . . otherwise, I'd have had to go all the way in just to show sketches," Don said, explaining that the page rates paid in those days just didn't warrant such extravagances as frequent trips to the Marvel offices in New York City.

How then did Don find out about the assignment that would introduce one of Marvel's mainstay characters? "Stan calls up and says, 'We've got a new character for you.' It's bang bang — you're going to do Iron Man." Don said that Stan would usually give him a synopsis to work from, maybe describing a couple of pages to him on the phone, "then, he'd say: 'Go — have fun!'"

Don remembered designing the physical appearance of the mighty Mandarin, Iron Man's preeminent foe, for this story. "He worked out fine. You know, a Fu Manchu-type character, which is how Stan described him," he said. When pressed if there was anything he might do differently, designing the character today, he admitted, "Oh, sure — you know, that skull cap thing is not exactly my greatest joy."

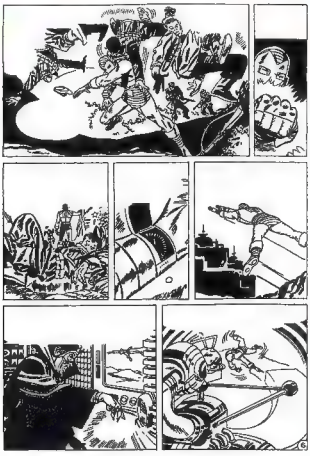
For his part, Editor Tom Brevoort considered Don's art re-creation a complete success. "If the need arises,

. . .There was a very real danger that this historic story would be lost to all. . .

we'd certainly do this again," he said. "I think Don did a great job. . .I think that anyone who had the original comic will be satisfied. Enough so that, if we didn't tell anyone, they probably wouldn't notice."

"You look at it and say there's so many things you'd like to fix, but that's not what they asked for. . . . Today I would change it completely — almost any artist would do that," Don said. "It was fun to do. It was strange, but it was fun."

– Terry Austin



Hot Sheet

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, Chanukah, and New Year's. . . An early Season's Greetings from Santa Claus's and Chanukah Harry's most Marvel-licious helpers! The two big gift distributors got together and asked us to clue them in on what Marvel's most deserving fans (that being anyone diligent enough to check out **MARVEL AGE** every month) should find wrapped nice and pretty this December. So, we did what any good little helper would do—we punted the question to those really in the know. So here's what the gift gurus had to say.

First, we went to Marvel's merry editorial staff for their own shopping recommendations. Associate Editor Eric Fein recommended, "Larry Hama's **WOLVERINE**, Frank Miller's Daredevil opus—'Born Again'—and J.M. DeMatteis's **SPIDER-MAN: SOUL OF THE HUNTER** (illustrated by Mike Zeck and Bob McLeod), the long-awaited sequel to **KRAVEN'S LAST HUNT**."

Newly-ordained editor Evan Skolnick was a bit cagey in telling us why he thought a subscription to Marvel's new **REN AND STIMPY** series would make the perfect holiday gift. "You must ask why?! You eeediot!" he screamed, eyes spinning in opposite directions. "Why? Because it is the best!" Okay, we believe you, Evan! But is there anything else you plan to wrap in Marvel paper? "**THE NEW WARRIORS** Trade Paperback would be a great gift to share with someone. This is solid comic book creating. It's exactly what Marvel Comics are like today. If you have a friend who doesn't read comics, this is the perfect way to introduce them to all of the excitement."

Trade Paperbacks, hmm. . . What an excellent idea. At least, that's what **ALPHA FLIGHT** Editor Rob Tokar thinks. "The **CAPTAIN BRITAIN** trade paperback would make an excellent gift—with the skyrocketing success of **EXCALIBUR**, Captain Britain has gotten a lot of exposure. But before **EXCALIBUR** showed what he could do at top form, he was a relatively unknown character. The trade paperback pulls his personality apart, so you can see what his flaws are and what he does to overcome them."

Finally, we caught up with **SHE-HULK** editor Renée Witterstaetter, who always has a unique idea or ten. "If the gift is going to an aspiring comics creator, then one of the best things he or she can get is something that will help them learn the craft. Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* is a must, and Wally Wood's one-page guide *22 Panels That Always Work*, if you can find it. Almost every editor in comics owns, or at least studied, these. There's a lot of helpful information which can help comic artists and writers learn more than just the mechanics. And it wouldn't hurt to find one of Andrew Loomis's Anatomy Books in your stocking, either.

"And, lest anyone forget," Renée continued, "though I can't see how they could, there is going to be another fantastic **MARVEL HOLIDAY SPECIAL** this year. Eighty-pages of Holiday cheer featuring some of Marvel's most popular characters by some of comic's best creators: Hulk by Peter David and Sam Keith, Wolverine by Larry Hama and Michael Golden, Spider-Man by Stan Lee and Steve Lightle. . .the list goes on and on. And pin-ups! And a special text piece on Marvel Christmases past. . . And. . ." Okay, we're convinced!

Like Renée, **FANTASTIC FOUR** and **RAVAGE 2099** penciller Paul Ryan has some good suggestions for the aspiring comic artist. "If you could get your hands on a copy of the original **OFFICIAL MARVEL TRY-OUT BOOK**, the would-be comics creator on your list would be eternally grateful. Better yet, you could get the **HOW TO DRAW COMICS HE MARVEL WAY** video. This video, with actual drawing tips from John Buscema [illegible]

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much more instructive than just reading how to do it." Luckily for fans everywhere, the **OFFICIAL MARVEL TRY-OUT BOOK** will be back in *print* just in time for the holidays!

Mark Bagley, whose art graces the aforementioned **NEW WARRIORS** trade paperback and can be seen monthly in **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**, brought a tear to this elf's eye with his dip into nostalgia. "I think one of the best gifts I ever got were a couple of volumes of the *Photo Journal of Marvel Comics* [from Gerber Publishing]. These fun-filled books track Marvel's history with color reprints of covers from Marvel's past. It's cool to look through each volume and see all of the comics you've bought, lost, or never even had a chance to get. This is a gift for a real Marvel fan." Adventure-hound Chuck (**PUNISHER WAR ZONE**) Dixon also feels that a slice of the past would make an excellent gift. "Simon and Kirby's **BOYS RANCH** is a must. . . It should be under every kid's cactus. And, I just heard that there's been a run on the toy version of Punisher's Battle Van. I hope some one gets one before they're gone from the shelves."

MARVEL
THE OFFICIAL MARVEL COMICS
TRY-OUT BOOK
1
Marvel starts the story — but you get to finish it! The ultimate in collaborations and a perfect way to learn how comics are created. The OFFICIAL MARVEL TRY-OUT BOOK is the best starting place for the aspiring writer, penciller, inker, colorist, or letterer . . . and a GREAT Christmas gift!

Next, the "Hot Sheet" went straight to the source to help finish our shopping—the comic shops.

For instance, Brian Schur of *Cosmic Comics* noted enthusiastically, "Some of the best gifts for the true Marvel fan would be any of the **MARVEL MASTERWORKS** collections. They are an inexpensive way to collect and read classic Marvel back issues. . . Other super-cool presents for the Marvelite would be *Marvel Universe Trading Cards*, the new action figures from Toy Biz, or the great Horizon vinyl model kits [The Hulk, Iron Man, and Silver Surfer, to name a few]."

Toys?! Did someone say toys?! Well, David Torgerson of *Westfield Comics* knows his toys, and he thinks that a bundle of toys would be a bundle of joy for a kid of any age. "For action figure fans, adults and children alike, the Marvel Action Figures produced by Toy Biz are some of the best—if not the best—available. With few exceptions, they are consistently entertaining and of high quality. Special features from the first batch, such as Wolverine's retractable claws, Cyclops's eye-beam, Hulk's roar, and Iron Man's removable armor give these figures a distinct advantage over the competition. And the new batch looks to be equally exciting, if not more so. Stand-outs, from what I've seen, include Cable (with really big guns), Deathlok (a pleasant surprise), and a new Silver Surfer that literally shines."

Steve Gursky of *Steve's Comic Relief* also points out that there is a lot to choose from when shopping for comic fans (or those you want to introduce to this great passion). "The theme of our stores is 'Illustrated Entertainment for the Family'," Steve points out. "One of the best

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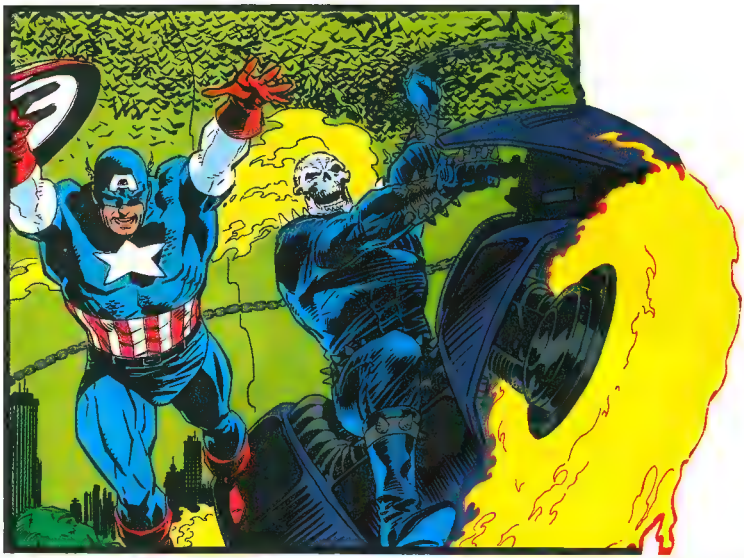
ways for families to grow together is to read together. Giving the gift of literacy should be a year-round practice, but in the season of gift giving, there is no better present to give than a book. Marvel has many gifts for all ages and tastes. Young girls will be thrilled to find their stocking stuffed with **BARBIE** (both the doll and an ample supply of the comics). If Dad remembers fondly the good ol' days of Clint Eastwood spaghetti westerns, a **BLUEBERRY** graphic novels by Moebius is an exciting gift. And does Mom know about Barbara Slate's **YUPPIES FROM HELL**? If she doesn't, you'll earn some brownie points (and maybe some brownies) by giving here a copy."

And Glen Friedman and Ron Hill of the *Jim Hanley's Universe* stores remind us of one book that should definitely not be overlooked when making your Marvel gift list. "Above all else, nothing deserves attention as a holiday gift as much as Les Daniels' *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*. This book is not only a great overview of the history of Marvel, but it gives the reader an opportunity to understand the personalities who make up this crazy world we know as comics." Glen and Ron also point out one particular graphic novel guaranteed to satisfy the most highbrow reader on your gift list. "One of the most sophisticated graphic novels to come out of Marvel's Epic imprint is **MOONSHADOW**. This highly literate story, geared to an adult audience, surpasses most of the work currently done in comics. This graphic novel, written by J.M. DeMatteis and painted by Jon J. Muth is one of the items that Jim Hanley's Universe is most proud to carry."

Ah yes, the Holidays. . . It's easy at this time of year to forget everything else that's happening around you—to just get lost in the moment. However, with some new releases this Winter, Marvel makes sure we all keep an eye on what's going on.

Perhaps the most exciting of these "time-oriented" releases is the next installment in Marvel's look into its



own future, **RAVAGE 2099**. This all-new creation by the Father of Marvel Comics, the legendary Stan Lee, depicts the techno-dominated world of tomorrow and the type of hero who is forced to rise up to deal with the evils which threaten man's existence. There's a lot of anticipation brewing concerning the stellar creative team Editor Joey Cavalieri has together for this special series. "**RAVAGE 2099** seems destined to become one of the hottest and coolest series in years," predicts Bob Borden of California-based *Fantasy Books and Games*. "The art by Paul Ryan and Keith Williams is spectacular, and a perfect fit for the exciting scripting of the one and only Stan Lee, making his writing return after a much too long absence. This series has everything that makes comics fun and enjoyable —good story, good art, good heroes, and good (evil) villains." Steve Snyder of Ohio's *Central City Comics* points out that nostalgia plays a part in the thrill of **RAVAGE 2099** "This trip into Marvel's future has transported me into Marvel's past. To once again read the prolific prose of Stan Lee is a real treat. Ravage is going to be the next big character in the Marvel Universe. I'm really excited about the 2099 line."

Another time-twisted book sure to turn fans heads this Winter is the **HULK** bookshelf special **FUTURE IMPERFECT**. This trip to the near-end of time with the Marvel Universe's number one smasher, written by series regular Peter David and drawn by George Perez, is the perfect way to wrap up another year. "Bo may know football," quips *Westfield*'s David Torgerson, "but Peter David knows the Hulk. Peter's interesting characterization and witty dialogue make **HULK** one of the most enjoyable reads every month. [And in **FUTURE IMPERFECT**] George Perez does what George Perez does best, drawing all-out action and an abundance of technological doo-dads. This is sure to be a very fun book."

And there's a third time-oriented projected slated for this December, the adventure/romance graphic novel **67 SECONDS** by writer James Robinson and artist Steve Yeowell. Gary Colabuono of *Moondog's* in Chicago sums up why this book deserves special attention. "In **67 SECONDS**, an average, non-super-powered man has only a little more than a minute to react to an impending crisis and decide whether or not he will take the dangerous steps needed to save the woman he loves. The artwork is handsome, the lightspeed pacing is totally appropriate. This is a book to recommend to Marvel fans looking for something different. **67 SECONDS** is a welcome, bold conceptual experiment from the House of Ideas."

Colabuono also points out another Epic Comics project we'd best not to overlook. "**MUTATIS** [the three-issue mini-series by writers Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning and artist John Higgins] is a beautifully rendered, spine-tingling science-fiction tale of evil genetic engineering and sinister corporate terrorism. The powerful artwork by Higgins is cleaned, detailed, and exceptionally well paced. The full-page illustration of the 'Hydropolis Skyscraper' is a killer! The cliff-hanger ending of the first chapter left me wanting more **MUTATIS**—now!"

Finally, what would a "Hot Sheet" be without mention of everyone's favorite flame-topped skeleton, Ghost Rider! Marvel serves up some deliciously wicked fun in **GHOST RIDER: FEAR**, a one-shot special, guest-starring Captain America, that'll make us all buy a night-light. "The art of graphic storytelling lives, thanks to Lee Weeks and Al Williamson," gleams *Central City*'s Steve Snyder. "With **GHOST RIDER: FEAR** the former **DAREDEVIL** art team, along with writer Howard Mackie, spin a tale of terror that will redefine the Scarecrow as a major villain." Cliff Biggers of *Dr. No's* also cowers in the face of this flaming horror. "Ghost Rider has never looked so good. First we get the great Kubert art in recent issues of the monthly, and now we get this top-notch Weeks-Williamson art. And a Ghost Rider/Captain Amer- combination is just offbeat enough to catch the reader's interest."

The holiday season. . .there's always something to warm up those cold nights. From all of us here at "Hot Sheet," here's hoping that you were more nice than naughty!

– *Jerry A. Novick*

THE MIGHTY MARVEL® BATTLE BALLOT

We're getting ready for our next titanic collection of Marvel's greatest – the top ten **slug-fests** in the history of the Marvel Universe – and **you're** going to help us select them!

For THE VERY BEST OF MARVEL COMICS, we asked the top comics professionals what their favorite tales were. For MARVEL'S BIG BAD BATTLE BOOK, we're asking *you*, the reader, to choose the contents of this latest collection of no-holds-barred free-for-alls – the tentacle-tumbles, the fist-fights, the blade-brawls that live in your memory for all time.

Pore through your vast library of Marvel Masterpieces and choose what you feel are the ten most explosive battles in Marvel history. Even if you don't have ten favorites, list as many as you want. Here are the ground rules:

1. Choose only one- or two-issue battles. Anything longer than 66 pages will have to be disqualified due to space limitations.
2. Be sure to list your favorites in order of preference, especially your number one choice, or we won't be able to tally the votes.
3. For your one top choice, let us know (on a separate sheet, in 25 words or less) *why* it got your top vote.
4. Be sure to include all of the titles and issue numbers that made up each slug fest.

Official Battle Ballot

My favorite Marvel slug fests of all-time are:

1. _____ 6. _____
2. _____ 7. _____
3. _____ 8. _____
4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

Your Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Complete this ballot (or a facsimile), and return it to: **Richard Ashford, BATTLE BOOK BALLOTS,** Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. All entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1992. Once we've tallied the votes, if we choose all ten of the slug fests you voted for, look for a special gift from our editors. So don't delay - *vote today!*

Mark's REMARKS

So I asked Stan Lee, "where did the idea of Bullpen Bulletin page, one of the fundaments of Marvel Comics, come from?" He told me:

"When I was a kid, there was this series of hardcover juvenile adventure books featuring a character named Jerry Todd. They were something like the Hardy Boys, but they had a lot of humor mixed in with the adventure. And at the very end of each book, the publisher printed letters from the readers as well as responses from the author himself. It was so informal, so warm. . .it made me feel like I knew these guys and they cared about what their readers thought. I was surprised at the time other books didn't see what a great idea this was. I don't know if I consciously remembered those books when I set out to do the Bullpen page years later, or if I was unconsciously influenced and only afterwards realized where I got the idea from. I do know that talking to the readers informally and indirectly seemed like the natural thing to do."

There you have it, another secret behind comics, from the man who wrote the book on secrets behind the comics.

In the beginning, there were letters pages—or "letters sections," as Stan liked to call 'em. Starting with **FANTASTIC FOUR #3** (cover dated March 1962, it came out in late 1961), Stan ran a page of fan mail in his flagship title and, with FF #11, expanded it to two pages. With issue #13, a "Special Announcements Section" appeared at the end of the second page of letters to respond to general fan mail topics and alert early Marveldom to other titles in the line. (Most titles wouldn't get letters pages of their own for a few years, so I'm tracking the Bullpen Bulletins' genesis through the pages of FF.)

By FF #24, this Special Announcements Section" often took up a whole column of the second page of letters, and by FF #33 (December 1964), "The Mighty Marvel Checklist" appeared imbedded within the "Special Announcements Section." Then with FANTASTIC FOUR #41 (August 1965), the page *before* the letters section, which had been an ad for Marvel's first fan club, the Merry Marvel Marching Society (MMMS), was labeled for the first time (ta-daa!)

The MERRY MARVEL BULLPEN PAGE!
X-MEN
$1.50
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
OFFICIAL SWINGIN' STATIONERY
ONLY $1.00 FOR ALL THIS! (WHICH IS WHY WE'LL NEVER BE RICH!)
THE DIZZY DRAWINGS BY OUR MARVEL MASTERS, AND THE AUTOGRAPHS OF OUR COS-TUMED CUT-UPS ON THE BACK OF THE PORTFOLIO, ARE ALMOST WORTH THE RIDICULOUS PRICE ALONE! WE KID THEE NOT!
MARVEL COMIC
DEPT. M-1
625 MADISON
NEW YORK CITY,
FOR T-SHIR
ADULT SIZES:
YOUTH SIZES:
M.M.M.S. MEMBERS: WRITE YOUR MEMBER-SHIP NUMBER AFTER YOUR NAME ON THE COUPON AND YOU'LL RECEIVE A FREE BONUS GIFT WITH YOUR ORDER!
MAKE OUT CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:
OKAY, I'M HOOKED! YOU GUYS FINALLY REACHED ME! NOW HERE'S WHAT I WANT:
STATIONERY KIT $1.00
X-MEN T-SHIRT $1.50
PLEASE INCLUDE 15¢ PER ITEM FOR POSTAGE AND HANDLING.
NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
IF YOU DON'T WANNA TEAR THIS PAGE WE'LL ACCEPT A COPY OF THE COUPON — MOVE YA!
THE M.M.M.S. WANTS YOU!

"The Merry Marvel Bullpen Page." Still hand-lettered and mostly featuring information and coupons for cool Marvel t-shirts, this first Bullpen Page had typeset names of 25 MMMS members. The checklist and special announcements were still on the letters pages.

Then with FF #45 (and all the other Marvel titles cover dated December 1965) the first modern "Marvel Bullpen Bulletins" page appeared with tidbits of news, the checklist (containing a mere nine other titles), a list of 25 more MMMS members, plus an ad for an FF t-shirt and Marvel stationery. In FF #46, there was a subheading beneath the Marvel Bullpen Bulletins banner: "More Nutty News and Notes from One Marvel Madman to Another!" Within a matter of issues, the typeset text began to dominate the page, crowding out all but the tiniest of illustrations. Here was a page of information presented in Stan's uniquely informal style, filled with straight-from-the-hip chat from The Man himself, using all sorts of pop lingo and cool catch phrases such as "true believers," "no-prizes," "'nuff said," "frantic one," "Brand Ecch," and "Make mine Marvel," as well as the occasional Latin quote!

With the April 1966 edition in FF #49, alliterative subtitles began to adorn the Bullpen page, the first reading "More mirthful, monumental, mind-staggering memoranda from your Marvel madmen!" (My favorite read" "A profound potpourri of perplexing pronouncements and preposterous philosophy, all portending practically nothing!")

In FANTASTIC FOUR #63 (June 1967) the first ever "Stan's Soapbox" appeared on the Bullpen Bulletins page, where our Leader waxed sincere on the topic of "The Marvel Philosophy." Here Stan really connected with his audience. The soapbox was somehow more specific and more intimate than Stan's writing anywhere else. The Bullpen Bulletins Page was the definitive place for everything in the medium that was uniquely Stan.

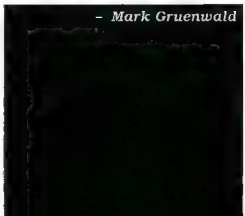
But all things had to come to an end, and, with the September 1972 Bullpen Page (FANTASTIC FOUR #126), Stan preempted all items (except the Checklist) to make room for an expanded Soapbox explaining how he was not only stepping down as editor of the whole Marvel line, but he would also be foregoing all regular comics writing. Not stated (but certainly implied) was that the Bullpen Bulletins page—with the exception of an occasional Stan's Soapbox, of course—would pass on to his successor. Through the '70's, the Bullpen Bulletins more or less followed the template established by Stan, and featured an alliterative subheading, various news and promotional items, a checklist (albeit an abbreviated one, since Marvel was now producing almost three times the number of titles it was in Stan's heyday), and more-or-less regular Stan's Soapboxes.

With the June 1977 issues (FF #183) the last alliterative subheading appeared ("Zounds! A Zealful Zetetic of Zestful Zanies to Zap the Zeitgeist") and, in the issue after, a listing of Marvel's editorial staff—a mere 14 in number—appeared in the masthead. This listing lasted until June 1978 (FF #196), ending the month before my name would have had to have been annexed to the masthead. (Coincidence? Conspiracy? You decide.) From 1978 through most of the '80's the Bullpen Page underwent various format changes. January 1980 (FF #214) brought back the Checklist, while #215 dropped all the items in favor of just Stan's Soapbox and the Checklist, a format that continued for almost a year before paid advertisements ate into the magazine's editorial page count and the BBP mysteriously vanished for a number of months. With FF #238 (January 1982), the BBP was back, minus the checklist and Stan's Soapbox, and signed for the first time by the pages' author, then-editor in chief Jim Shooter.

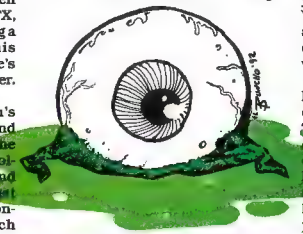
Throughout most of the '80's, all Stanisms of the previous two decades were eradicated in favor of a new idiosyncratic tone for the page. There were various new innovations, such as guest columns written by various freelancers, the Hype Box, and tongue-in-cheek photo features (editors wearing hats, and the Hunk of the Month). The Checklist was expanded to fit the number of titles Marvel was publishing. FF #299 (February '87) featured the last of this style '80's Bullpen page and, after three months with no Bulletins, I took over as editor of the page, a position I've held ever since.

My writing staff and I have put that poor page through a lot in an effort to regain a consistent voice and the best balance of features—way too much to fit into this month's column. Tell you what, if enough of you request it, I'll convince my editor to let me write a behind the scenes look at the Bullpen Bulletins Page as it stands today. Till then, shoot the bull!

– *Mark Gruenwald*



KEEP YOUR ON THE SPIDER



Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

This month's arachnoid letter column title comes to us from Jeff Osborne of College Station, TX, and it's rather fitting, considering a number of our letters this timearound pertain to everyone's favorite thirty-year-old wall-crawler. Thanks, Jeff!

Before we jump into this month's mail, let's take a second to remind the rest of you that we're still on the lookout for a brand new letter column title every single month. Send those ideas on in! Also, don't forget to vote on whether we should continue to feature a new title each month or simply pick a single, snappy title and stick with it.

Who says you folks aren't our real editors?

Dear Sirs,

In MARVEL AGE 114, you state, and I quote, ". . .Spider-Man has proven to be one super hero that has never been banned in any country. This is a consideration, because in some countries, such as Sweden and Germany, governments try to place an emphasis on the more nonviolent characters."

What I object to in this statement is the obvious conclusion that Sweden (and Germany) can ban comics because of the violence in them. This is not true! Freedom of the press works for comics as well as newspapers and everything else that is printed. That means that a comic book can never be banned in Sweden! The only thing that can happen is that the person who is legally responsible for the book can be put on trial and there be sentenced to a fine or two years in prison. And that has *never* happened! We've only had one court procedure concerning comics and that case dealt with one issue of POX, an anthology book that contains adult material, and the case was laughed out of court.

A super hero book would never be put on trial because over here, the genre is considered too unrealistic to do any harm. People who want to know more about comics in Sweden or Swedish comics should contact

Seriefranjandet
Agnegatan
S-112 29 Stockholm
Sweden

This is a non-profit organization that is the center for comic book fandom. This is also a lobbying group for comics toward publishers, politicians, newspapers, etc. Its greatest achievement is that the Swedish Arts Council gives out $200,000 in grants to publishers and creators.

Please write to them or least try to find out what great people us Swedes are. And remember: it was a Swede who designed the Coke bottle.

Staffan Dahlberg
Rogestavagen 21
S-13900 Varmdo
Sweden

Thanks for clearing that up for us, Staffan. Actually, hearing about the way comic books are treated in Sweden makes us curious about how they're regarded elsewhere. We get a sizable amount of mail from correspondents around the globe, so how about it, folks? What do people think about comics where you live? How are they published? Who buys them? Let us know! After all, that kind of free and open discussion just might help lead us to world peace.

Even if our last letter doesn't lead us to world peace, though, it certainly will lead us to our LETTER OF THE MONTH! Yes, just like every month, we've dug deep into our mail sacks to come up with a letter that we think will be of particular interest to Marveldom at large, and we've printed it here in a place of honor.

This issue's Letter of the Month addresses an issue that may be especially important for comics—namely, comics that address important issues!

Marvelous friends,

Just a short note (it is final exam time, after all) pertaining, in my humble opinion, to a very pertinent issue. We're all aware of the numerous organizations established to help troubled young people such as the ubiquitous phone services. Evidently, these services are sufficiently used—enough to continue to exist—and they usually do help. We all know that a vast part, if not the majority, of your readers are minors; why, then, do we not see more publicity for such services in your publications, the preferred literature of most minors?

Perhaps Marvel, having reached the status of a large, profitable corporation, should assert a position of greater concern toward a certain number of its readers. Why not show an altruistic side: allow one page, or whatever you think is appropriate, to these organizations for free or at a nominal fee. Take the initiative—become a volunteer corporation! Encourage others! Make me happy! I applaud your previous efforts for Boys Town, but make it a regular, recurring feature—make Spidey a spokes-spider!

Explore the possible alternatives and become active! Nothing is impossible for the illustrious House of ideas!

I hereby conclude this missive with already-classic words: "Go ahead. . . Print my address. I ain't scared."

P.S. Just who, exactly, is reading this letter?

Rajmund Miksa
80 Rue Saint-Elzear

Riviere-du-Loup
Quebec, Canada
G5R 1X7

You've raised some interesting issues, Rajmund. Actually, because of his experience working with non-profit organizations, our esteemed editor wanted to answer you himself. Here's what he had to say:

Dear Rajmund, A magazine such as MARVEL AGE (or any Marvel mag, for that matter), is distributed nationally, and so can't tap into every local public service organization, no matter how successful they may be. And when someone needs assistance, they should find the folks *in their community* most qualified to help.

Still, having worked for the American Red Cross and having seen, from the inside, efforts by a number of very vital organizations, I can urge our readers to find a community group that *they* can support. I can't (and wouldn't) tell you which efforts to join—that kind of commitment has to come from within—but I can point out that we all live together as part of the human family, and we all have a part we can fulfill. It's important to do what we can.

On occasion, we will show our fans the kind of efforts the folks here at Marvel support. If MARVEL AGE readers want to let us know how *they* get involved, they'll find that the best way to promote any organization is by personal example.

As for who reads your letters: once I've read the missives that come in, I turn them over to Sholly Fisch, who pulls together one of the most entertaining letters pages you'll find in comics. Take a bow, Sholly.

—Steve Saffel

Aw, shucks, Steve. You'll make me blush.

I do want to add one point to Steve's reply, though, Let's not forget the broad range of humanitarian efforts to which Marvel *does* contribute: helping to promote literacy, publishing special comics about drugs and child abuse, and participating in last year's Operation Comics Shield, in which free comic books were sent to American troops fighting in Desert Storm. And that doesn't count the efforts of individual comics pros like writer Scott Lobdell, who's contributing all his royalties from the much-publicized Northstar issue of ALPHA FLIGHT to the Pediatric AIDS foundation.

In sum, there are a number of causes to which Marvel has contributed.

Dear Guys and Gals,

Yes! Yes! Yes! MARVEL AGE #114 was brilliant! A whole issue devoted to Spidey! What more can I say? (Plenty more, as it happens, but hey! On with it!)

I've been a Spider-Man fan and dedicated reader for many years now, and I can definitely say that the quality and brilliance of the SPIDER-MAN titles has gone uphill since the days of Lee and Ditko. I love the direction in which the new writers and artists have taken Spidey to where he is today. In some strange way, they have maintained the quality and simplicity of Peter Parker and Spider-Man from the days of Spidey's origin.

And that's why Spider-Man has been so successful: because the two persons have remained basically the same. Thirty years of Spider-Man *is* a *long* time. Another reason for Spidey's success has been the ideas that have kept Spidey going, the different angles that keep cropping up, such as the re-appearance of Peter Parker's so-called parents, an alien costume, and the origins of villains such as Venom and Carnage. All of these factors have helped to propel Spider-Man to the top of the comic-book business.

Mr. Saffel. . .you sure did get it right. I do still get a rush to see Pete attacked by Hobgoblin, Doc Oak, or the Vulture. I do still feel a rush of adrenaline when I take that copy of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN off the shelf and open it.

Basically, what I'm trying to say is that you guys (and gals!) at Marvel have done a terrific job in treating Spidey over the past thirty years. So keep it up! By all means, keep it up!

Darren McHugh
65 Glenview Park
Tallaght
Dublin 24
Ireland

We'll do our best, Darren! And we hope you'll continue to let us know how we're doing.

We're always interested in hearing about what our characters mean to people like you (or James Dysart, whose letter about Spidey appeared last issue). And that's not limited to letters, either! Somewhere on this page, you should be able to find photos of Noel Green of Springfield, MO, depicting his homemade Spider-Man costume, not to mention his brother Jason, who's dressed as Spider-Man 2099. Pretty impressive, guys!

That's right—once again, we've reached our monthly rendezvous among the world's friendliest spies, the Wild Agents of Marvel! There may not be trenchcoats or hats among our Agents, but they do exchange a lot of vital information.

Nevertheless, this time around, we've decided to break with tradition and feature a letter that isn't written *by* an Agent. Instead, it asks *about* WAM itself. . .

Dear Sir/Madame,

This letter is sent to you requesting your help on something. I would like someone to send me information about WAM, the Wild Agents of Marvel, so I may join. Please send me this information A.S.A.P. Thanks.

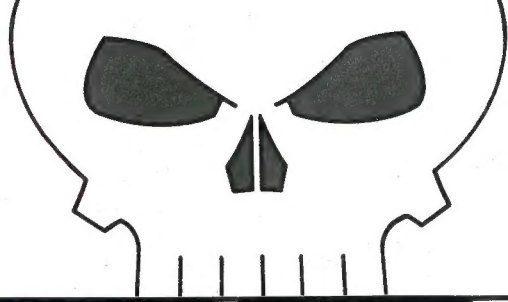
Bobby L. Garner II
Rt. 2, Box 56
Abbeville, SC 29620

No problem, Bobby. Joining up is as easy as falling off a log. Or even as easy as sending $13.99 to "Wild Agents of Marvel, c/o Marvel Comics Group" at the address at the top of this column. In return for your membership fee, you'll not only become part of the crew; you'll also receive a package of goodies that includes an exclusive WAM pin, membership card, and certificate, plus stationery, trading cards, and more! On top of that, you'll also get periodic mailings containing inside information on upcoming Marvel-related projects.

To tell you the truth, you've picked a pretty good time to become a Wild One. A top-secret mailing went out just last month, and another one is planned in about a month or so.

And speaking of a month or so, that's when we'll be seeing you next, since it looks like we're out of space yet again. So until then, aloha, amigos! A bientot!

checklist



FIRST WEEK

AVENGERS WEST COAST #90 1.25

CAGE #10 1.25

CAPTAIN AMERICA #411 1.25
Diamondback squares off against Snapdragon.

CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER #18 4.95

DAREDEVIL #312 1.25
DD uncovers a devious plot by an unseen foe.

DARKHAWK #23 1.25
Featuring Darkhawk's demonic doppleganger—Evilhawk.

EXCALIBUR #60 1.75

MARVEL MASTERWORKS #22 34.95

MARVEL MILESTONES:
IRON MAN #55 2.95

MUTATIS #2 2.25

NAMOR #34 1.25
Concluding the Dr. Doom/Master Khan epic.

NIGHT THRASHER #4 2.00
Thrash fights his former love, Silhouette.

NIGHTSTALKERS #3 1.75

NOMAD #9 1.75
Nomad confronts the surfing assasin Ebbtide.

ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER #7 1.75
GR faces the hell-spawned Witch Woman.

PUNISHER: DIE HARD IN THE BIG EASY 4.95

SHE-HULK #47 1.75
Shulkie & Rocket Racoon battle the alien D'bari.

SPIDER-MAN 2099 #3 1.25
Spidey confronts the corporate killer, Venture.

STRYFE'S STRIKE FILE #1 1.50

TERROR INC. #7 1.75
Hints of Terror's origin are revealed.

TOMB OF DRACULA:
SAVAGE RETURN 2.00
Re-presenting TOMB OF DRACULA #1 & 2.

UNCANNY X-MEN #296 1.50
Gambit goes solo against Caliban.

WCW WRESTLING #10 1.25
Sting & Rick Rude battle the Ghoul.

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #96 1.25

SECOND WEEK

ALPHA FLIGHT #116 1.75
Super-villain, Wyre, is stalked by Weapon X.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #372 1.25
Spidey & the Black Cat battle the Spider Slayers.

BARBIE #25 1.25

DEATH'S HEAD II #2 1.75

DARKHOLD #4 1.75
Sabretooth & the Redeemers battle the demonic N'Garai.

GHOST RIDER #33 1.75
Madcap turns commuters into raving lunatics.

GROO THE WANDERER #97 2.25

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #32 1.25
A Badoon gains the Captain Universe power.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #119 1.50
Four tales of Wolverine, Constrictor, Wonder Man & Ghost Rider.

MARVEL MILESTONES: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #129 2.95

MARVEL SUPER HERO SPECIAL #12 2.50

ONYX OVERLORD #4 2.50

PENDRAGON #7 1.75
The Knights struggle to save the planet Arachne.

PUNISHER WAR ZONE #11 1.75
Rosalie Carbone tries to kill the Punisher.

QUASAR #42 1.25

RAVAGE 2099 #2 1.25
The diabolical Deathstryk attacks Tiana & Dack.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #205 2.25
Conan is sold as a slave.

SILVER SABLE #8 1.25

SLEEPWALKER #20 1.25

THOR #457 1.25
The return of the original Thor!

WOLVERINE #65 1.75

WONDER MAN #17 1.25
AWC subdue a berserk Wondy.

X-FORCE & SPIDER-MAN: SABOTAGE 6.95

CROSSOVERS

"Spirits of Venom"

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #96 1.25
Part 3 of 4.

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #6 1.75
Part 4 of 4.

"X-cutioner's Song"

UNCANNY X-MEN #296 1.50
Part 9 of 12.

X-FACTOR #86 1.25
Part 10 of 12.

X-MEN #16 1.25
Part 11 of 12.

X-FORCE #18 1.25
Part 12 of 12.

THIRD WEEK

AVENGERS #358 1.25
The Avengers are abducted by the alien Arkon.

CONAN #264 1.25
Conan returns to the life of a thief.

CONAN SAGA #70 2.25
Conan leads an oppressed town in revolt.

DOOM 2099 #1 1.75

EXCALIBUR #61 1.75
The Phoenix confronts Galactus.

FISH POLICE #4 1.25

G.I. JOE #132 1.25

HELL'S ANGELS #7 1.75
MyS-TECH creates a brainwashing television.

INCREDIBLE HULK #401 2.25
The fate of the Leader is revealed.

THE MANY ARMORS OF IRON MAN TPB 14.95

MARVEL AGE #120 1.00

MARVEL MILESTONES:
IRON FIST #14 2.95

MARVEL TALES #269 1.25
Spidey faces the Red Ghost & his Super Apes.

MORBIUS #5 1.75

NICK FURY
AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. #43 1.75
The return of Clay Quartermain.

NIGHTBREED #23 2.25

PUNISHER #74 1.25

PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL 2.50

SLAPSTICK #3 1.25
Slapstick is attacked by evil child genius, Dr. Denton.

SPIDER-MAN #30 2.95
Spidey combats an evil Frankenstein-like monster.

TOMB OF DRACULA:
THE WEDDING OF DRACULA 2.00
Re-presenting TOMB OF DRACULA #30, 45 & 46.

WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #12 1.75
Drax remembers how he died.

WHAT IF #45 1.25
What if Barbara Ketch had become Ghost Rider?

X-FACTOR #86 1.50

X-MEN #16 1.50
Stryfe's secret identity is revealed.

X-MEN ANIMATION #3 1.25
Magneto appears in this adaptation of the TV show.

PREMIERES

DOOM 2099 #1 1.75
A foil-stamped cover adorns this introduction to the future Lord of Latveria.

TEAM HELIX #1 1.75
An all-new super team of four genetically enhanced teenagers.

FOURTH WEEK

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #373 1.25
Will Peter Parker tell his parents his secret identity?

BARBIE FASHION #25 1.25

DEATHLOK #19 2.25

DEATH'S HEAD & KILLPOWER:
BATTLETIDE #2 1.75

DIGITEK #2 1.95
Digitek vs. the computerized killer Bacillicons.

DR. STRANGE #49 1.75
The Sorceror Supreme loses his powers.

FANTASTIC FOUR #372 1.25
Reed & Ben battle a rogue Watcher.

HELLRAISER DARK HOLIDAY SPECIAL 3.95

THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD #1 of 12 2.50

IRON MAN #288 1.25

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #120 1.50

MARVEL MILESTONES:
FANTASTIC FOUR #5 2.95

MARVEL REQUIRER #34 Free

MARVEL UNIVERSE HANDBOOK #26 4.50
Featuring bios of Morbius, Stryfe & Drax the Destroyer.

METALLIC MEMORIES 18.95

MOON KNIGHT #46 1.75
The Demogoblin virus threatens MK's life.

MOTORMOUTH & KILLPOWER #8 1.75
Motormouth & Killpower fight a 40 ft. worm.

NEW WARRIORS #31 1.25
The debut of Firestar's new costume.

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #50

SILVER SURFER #76 1.25
New information about Morg.

SLEEPWALKER HOLIDAY SPECIAL 2.00

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #196 1.25
Vermin dies.

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #6 1.75

TEAM HELIX #1 1.75

THE 'NAM #76 1.75
Rob Little returns home and faces the death of his brother.

THOR #458 1.25

WARHEADS #8 1.75

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEK WORLD #5 1.75
Concluding the Tek War novel adaptation.

X-FORCE #18 1.50
Scott & Jean's relationship will never be the same.

X-MEN CLASSIC #79 1.25
The X-Men vs. Dark Phoenix!

BOOKS & SPECIAL COMICS

HELLRAISER HOLIDAY SPECIAL 3.95
48 pages of the holidays in hell.

THE MANY ARMORS OF IRON MAN TPB 14.95
A 208-page retrospective on the Avenger's varied armors.

PUNISHER: DIE HARD IN THE BIG EASY 4.95
The Punisher is buried alive by a bizarre voodoo cult.

PUNISHER HOLIDAY SPECIAL 2.50
48 pages of yuletide mayhem.

SLEEPWALKER HOLIDAY SPECIAL 2.00
Four new Sleepy stories in 48-pages.

X-FORCE & SPIDER-MAN: SABOTAGE 6.95
A collection the landmark "sideways" issues of X-FORCE & SPIDER-MAN.

LIMITED SERIES

DEATH'S HEAD & KILLPOWER:
BATTLETIDE #2 1.75
DH, Killpower, Wolverine, Hell's Angel & Hercules compete in an intergalactic gladiator match to the death.

THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD #1 of 12 2.50
A die cut wraparound cover kicks off these re-presentations of the original Death's Head.

STRYFE FILES #1 1.50

GUEST APPEARANCES

ALPHA FLIGHT #116 1.75
Weapon X

CAGE #10 1.25
The Hulk & Rhino

CAPTAIN AMERICA #411 1.25
The Falcon

DEATH'S HEAD II #2 1.75
Wolverine

DEATH'S HEAD & KILLPOWER: BATTLETIDE #2 1.75
Wolverine, Hell's Angel & Hercules

DIGITEK #2 1.95
Deathlok

EXCALIBUR #60 1.75
Iron Man, Black Panther & Captain America

HELL'S ANGELS #7 1.75
The X-Men

MOTORMOUTH & KILLPOWER #8 1.75
Cable

NEW WARRIORS #31 1.25
X-Force

PENDRAGON #7 1.75
Spider-Man & the Warheads

SHE-HULK #47 1.75
Rocket Racoon

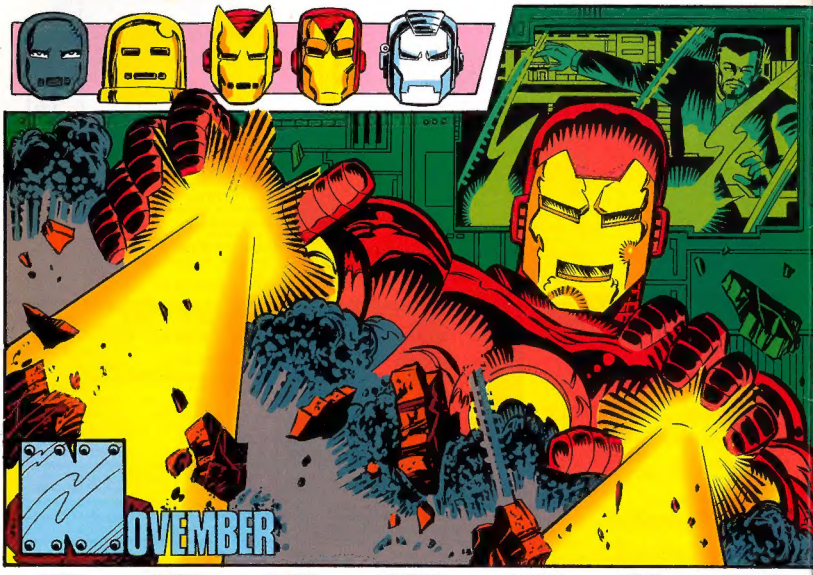
SILVER SURFER #76 1.25
Jack of Hearts

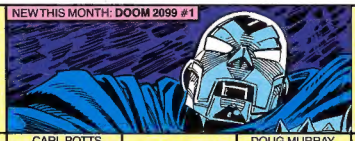
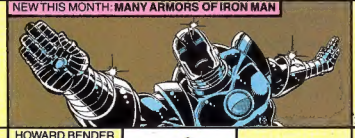
TEAM HELIX #1 1.75
Wolverine

TERROR INC. #7 1.75
The Punisher

WARHEADS #8 1.75
The X-Men & the Silver Surfer.

WONDER MAN #17 1.25
Avengers West Coast



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JIM GALTON 1	HOWIE POST 2	SUSAN EHRENREICH 3	NEW THIS MONTH: **DOOM 2099 #1** 			RODNEY RAMOS 7
	BILL MANTLO MORT TODD 9	10	CARL POTTS DAVE COCKRUM		DOUG MURRAY 13	14
 8	RICHARD HOWELL JOHN LEWANDOWSKI 16	SUE FLAXMAN 17	**11 VETERANS' DAY** NEW THIS MONTH: **MANY ARMORS OF IRON MAN** 	12		MARK ALEXANDER 21
	CARL GAFFORD 23	24	HOWARD BENDER CHRIS CLAREMONT 25	 **26 THANKSGIVING**	27	28
THE **LIZARD'S** 1ST APPEARANCE THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #6 1963 30		ENTER: **WOLVERINE** (INCREDIBLE HULK #181) 1974 				

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